

REPORT

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THE CONFERENCE

OF

THE BLIND

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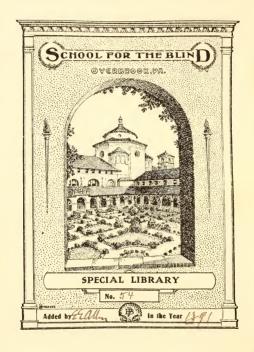
THEIR FRIENDS,

HELD AT THE

ROYAL NORMAL COLLEGE FOR THE BLIND

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JULY, 1890.



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BLIND AND THEIR FRIENDS,

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In JULY, 1890.



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PREFACE.

A FEW prefatory remarks are needful on two points. They are in explanation of the delay in bringing out this Report, and of the omissions and errors that inevitably occur therein. These arose from the fact that the shorthand writer unfortunately lost his reason within a few days after he took the notes, and before he had time to transcribe them. They were submitted to skilful writers, who, however, were unable in some places to decipher the sense.

These remarks apply only to the speeches, and not to the papers and reports which were read at the Conference.

The other point is the terrible loss that the Blind have sustained by the death of their Friend, Counsellor and Benefactor, Thomas Rhodes Armitage. Those who are interested in the Blind look around, but in vain, for another who would, or could, so ungrudgingly devote to the Blind such an amount of time, money, valuable information, and eagerly-sought advice. His experience was gained by a life of unselfish love given to his fellow-sufferers with the highest and purest motives, and by personal visits to many hundreds of desolate homes, now made bright by his cheerful, sympathetic and Christian words, and his ready help. His warm heart and ample purse were always open to the sorrowful pleadings of the Blind, and few, if any, deserving cases ever asked in vain.

His skilful hand was to have pruned this Report before publication, and by his generosity it has been printed.

Copies of this Report, price 2s. each, can be obtained from Mr. G. R. Boyle, 33, Cambridge Square, Hyde Park, London, W.

HENRY J. WILSON,

Secretary to Gardner's Trust for the Blind, and Hon. Secretary to the Conference of the Blind and their Friends in 1890.

January 26th, 1891.

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T the Conference of the Managers, Friends, and Teachers of the Blind, held at York, in July, 1883, it was decided, on the invitation of Dr. Campbell, that the next Conference of the Park College Callege Cal

ference should be held at the Royal Normal College for the Blind, at Norwood. As the Royal Commission was appointed in 1885 and its report was not presented to Parliament till 1889, it was not considered desirable to hold a Conference during the sitting of the Commission; but when the Report was nearly completed, a preliminary meeting was held at 33, Cambridge Square, on February 21st, 1889, to arrange about the forthcoming Conference. The gentlemen present at that meeting were Dr. T. R. Armitage, Mr. A. Buckle, Dr. F. J. Campbell, Messrs. Carter, Harris, Martin, McCormick, and Pine.

The principal subjects for discussion were determined on, and the following Sub-Committees were appointed, with power to add to their number up to five members.

- Organising Committee.—Dr. T. R. Armitage, Chairman; Dr. F. J. Campbell; Rev. R. P. Stickland (declined); Mr. F. Peterson Ward; Mr. Henry J. Wilson.
 - I. PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.—Messrs. Illingworth (Edinburgh), Secretary; Allen (St. John's Wood); Bryning (Manchester); Hall (Swansea); Miss M. C. Greene (London School Board).
 - II. TECHNICAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION AS A PREPARATION FOR EARNING A LIVELIHOOD:
 - A. Handicrafts. Messrs. Pine (Nottingham), Secretary; Martin (Edinburgh); Macdonald (Dundee); McCormick (Manchester).
 - B. Music.—Messrs. Barnes (St. John's Wood); Haigh (Manchester); Marchant (St. George's); Stericker (Greenock).
 - C. PROFESSIONS,—The Rev. S. S. Forster; Messrs. Goodwin; E. C. Johnson (declined); the Rev. F. Marston; Dr. Ranger (declined).
 - III. STATE AID TO BLIND INSTITUTIONS.—Messrs. Carter (Sheffield), Secretary; Arrol (Glasgow); Sime (Edinburgh).
 - IV. WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND.—Messrs. Martin (Edinburgh), Secretary; Hewitt (Belfast); Pine (Nottingham); Plater Birmingham.
 - V. Assistance to, and Supervision of, the Blind after Leaving School.—Dr. T. R. Armitage, Secretary; Messrs. Buckle (York); McCormick (Manchester); Munby (York).



CONFERENCE OF THE BLIND AND THEIR FRIENDS.

PRESIDENT:

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, K.G.

VICE PRESIDENTS:

THE RIGHT HON, and RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

Dr. F. J. CAMPBELL.

Mrs. Fawcett.

THE REV. CANON FLEMING.

M. E. MARTIN, Director of the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles, Paris.

M. J. MOLDENHAWER, Director of the Royal Institution for the Blind at Copenhagen.

THE RIGHT HON. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR LYON PLAYFAIR, K.C.B., M.P.

W. S. SETON-KARR, Esq., Chairman of the Committee of Gardner's Trust for the Blind.

M. Simonon, Founder and Director of the School for the Blind at Ghlin-lez-Mons, Belgium.

M. MAURICE DE LA SIZERANNE, Secretary of the Association Valentin Hauy, and Organising Secretary of the Société de Placement et de Secours, Paris.

M. Vangrot, St. Petersburgh (unable to be present).

CONFERENCE SECRETARIES

MESSRS. HENRY J. WILSON, Secretary of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, London, and W. RAWSON CARTER, of Sheffield.

MEMBERS:

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BUTLER, MISS J. E., London.

CAMPBELL, DR. F. J., Royal Normal College.

CAMPBELL, MRS. F. J., Royal Normal College. CAMPBELL, GUY M., Royal Normal College.

CAMPBELL, MISS A., London.

CAPETTE, M., Belgium. CARTER, W. R., Sheffield.

CARTER, L. W., London.

Cov, John, Leicester.

CUMMINGS, W. H., London. CUMMINGS, NORMAN, Dundee.

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FAMY, REV. T. B., St. Joseph's Male Blind Asylum.

FARROW, Rev. J. W., Ashton-under-Lyne.

Fenn, W. W.

FIELD, JAMES, Upper Norwood.

Fossitt, H., Dublin. Free, H., London.

GARRETT, H., Ashton Common.

GIRDWOOD, MISS, Southsea.

GLADSTONE, MISS, Kensington. GOLDBERG, MISS LEAH, London.

GREENE, MISS M. C., London.

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Hall, J., Swansea.

HALLER, MISS E., Hull.

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HALLETT, F. E., Cardiff.

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Hobson, Miss M., Belfast Hollins, Alf., London.

HOPKINS, DR. E. J., London.

ILLINGWORTH, W. H., Edinburgh.

INSKIP, MISS L., London. Keir, John, Aberdeen, NB.

Kelly, Sister, M. P., Cork (St. Raphael's).

Landells, J., Newcastle-on-Tyne (Victoria Asylum).

Macdonald, J., Glasgow. Macdonald, C., Dundee.

MARSTON, REV. H. J. R., Gloucestershire.

MARTIN, W., Edinburgh. MARTIN, MONSIEUR, Paris. MAYNE, MISS E., Islington. McCormick, J., Manchester. Meeson, J. B., Leeds.

MOBERLY, MAJ.-GEN. A. S., Hon. Sec. Kent Workshops. Moon, Dr., Brighton.

Moon, Miss A. E. E., Brighton.

Munby, F. J., York.

NIEDERHAUSERN, H. de von, Durham. NELIGAN, THE REV. CANON, Dublin.

Newbery, Miss, Kilburn.

PINE, H. W. P., Nottingham. PLATER, JOHN J., Birmingham.

PLUMPTRE, MRS,, Newton Abbot. PRESLAND, REV. JOHN, London.

PRIESTLEY, W., Bradford. RANGER, DR., London.

RAWLINSON, MRS. M. A., Burnley.

Sanford, Col., London. SCOTT, MISS E., Islington.

Shadwell, J. L., Kensington. Sime, J., Edinburgh.

Simonon, M., Belgium.

SIZERANNE, MONSIEUR, Paris.

SMITHER, F. D., London. SOUTTEN, B., London.

STOVER, W. L., Upper Norwood.

STOVER, MRS. W. L., Upper Norwood. Symes, Monsieur, Paris.

Tait, R., London.

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Townson, J., Accrington.

TURNER, H. S., Dumbartonshire.

TURNER, F., Glasgow. VERD, MADAME, Paris.

Verner, Miss O. J., London. WEAVER, MISS, Notting Hill.

West J., Putney.

WESTERN, MISS J. C., Shortlands.

Western, George A., Shortlands.

WILLIS, A. C., London. WILMOT, A., Croydon.

WILSON, H. J., Westminster. WILSON, MISS ELEANOR, Leeds.

Wolstenholme, James, Blackburn.

Young, John, Lee.

Young, Miss, Kensington.

The Conference met on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th of July, 1890, at the Royal Normal College, from 10.45 a.m. to 1 p.m. The morning sittings were preceded by a short religious service, in which the pupils of the College took part. The afternoon sittings, from 3 to 5, took place on the 22nd and 24th, at the College; on the 23rd, at Grosvenor House, and on the 25th the Prize Festival of the Royal Normal College was held at the Crystal Palace.

An Exhibition in connection with the Conference was open every day at St. Andrew's Hall. See page 160.

TUESDAY, JULY 22nd.

The Business Meeting commenced at 10.45 a.m. In the unavoidable absence of the Right Rev. Bishop Barry, the chair was taken by Mrs. Fawcett.

MRS. FAWCETT: I have not taken any active part personally in the matter of the Education of the Blind, but have only been an interested spectator; and I may be regarded as having consented to occupy the Chair at this meeting, not on my own account, but as representing the deep interest taken in the work by my husband in his lifetime. I would especially wish to urge the very great importance of conducting pari passu the mental and physical education of the Blind, having become convinced, from my own experience of children in the Normal College, of the immense advantage of providing them with the best methods in both these branches of education; in fact, it is almost an impossibility to develop their mental qualities before the physical have been attended to, and I would earnestly recommend that this fact be kept in mind by the Conference.

The President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference having been proposed, separately, by Dr. Armitage, and duly elected, Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Secretary to Gardner's Trust for the Blind, and Mr. William Rawson Carter, of Sheffield, were appointed Secretaries to the Conference.

Dr. Armitage welcomed the foreign friends, and said, that there were six visitors from Paris, representing nearly every part of the great blind question. M. Martin represented the oldest blind institution in the world, and one that was, if not the best, at any rate hard to beat, since there was no better managed institution in the world than that of Paris. M. de la Sizeranne, the official representative of the department for assisting the blind after they leave such institutions, had devoted his whole

life to the work, and was the editor of three papers devoted to the blind in France. There were delegates also from Belgium, and Denmark, and if the Germans were not present en corps, he felt sure they were en cœur. Though the Conference was not quite international, still foreign countries were well represented, and to one and all he extended a hearty greeting.

M. MAURICE DE LA SIZERANNE, who replied in French, said: As Dr. Armitage has had the courtesy to use the French language in welcoming the foreign friends of the Blind, permit me in the name of these foreigners, and especially in that of my countrymen, to thank him in the same language. In this splendid college, where the names of Hauy and of Braille are venerated, we are happy to meet the representatives of most of the Institutions and Societies for the assistance of the Blind which are situated in the great city of London, and in the generous country of England. On our return we shall proclaim with a loud voice to our countrymen, what the British Islands have done towards improving the condition of the blind. I wish, now, to thank you for your courtesy in electing so many foreigners as Vice-Presidents. You have been kind enough to include my name. For this I would express my deep gratitude, for, doubtless, in proposing my name, Dr. Armitage wished to submit to your vote, the idea of which I am champion. Independently of any institution or society, I have been striving for the last ten years to unite in France all the friends of the Blind in order, by their united efforts, to produce the greatest possible results. The general good of the Blind, and not the interest of any particular institution—this should be our true aim, should it not? It also seems to me that this is the spirit which should prevail in all our general meetings. It is exactly this spirit of union and concord of which I am proud to be the representative, and of which you have shown your approval by electing, as one of your Vice-Presidents, the General Secretary of the Association Valentin Haüy pour le bien des Aveugles.

Dr. Campbell, also, welcomed the guests, and explained the arrangements made for their convenience during the Conference, and he stated that during the discussion on the several papers, no one would be allowed to speak for more than ten minutes without special permission from the Chair.

A question was asked, whether the papers to be read this morning were to be regarded as official, or as representative of individual opinion, and Dr. Campbell explained that the first was the Report of a Sub-Committee; but that the second might possibly be regarded as the expression of individual opinion.

It was, therefore, suggested by a Member that the discussion on the Report should take place before Mr. Macdonald read his paper, but the question having been put to the meeting was lost.

Mrs. Fawcett then called on Mr. Illingworth, of Edinburgh, to read the Report of the Sub-Committee on Primary Education of the Blind.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think what I am going to read can scarcely come under the heading of a paper, consisting, as it does, of a series of propositions, that were drawn up by myself, and then sent to the various Members of the Sub-Committee to approve, or disapprove of, by making their vote for or against each proposition, in the margin; then a summary was made from these propositions, which, after being slightly altered on one or two points where there was a little friction, met with the approval of the whole of the Sub-Committee, and I think will now be approved by the whole of the Members of the Conference.

PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

- r.—That the Education of the Blind should commence at from six to seven years of age, and that from that age until ten years of age as much Kindergarten work be introduced as their case demands, and that their further education be illustrated wherever possible and necessary with Models, Maps in Relief. &c.
- 2.—That with regard to Reading, the Braille type is admitted to be the most valuable educational means; but that there is no objection to the use of Moon and the Roman types as supplementary.
- 3.—That a method of Writing with lead pencil is of much value, and should be included in the curriculum. The Guldberg type is simple and can be used by all.
- 4.—That for Arithmetical Calculations, Taylor's Arithmetic Board is the best; but great importance should be attached to mental calculation.
- 5.—That simple Gymnastic Exercises, including Musical Drill, should always be included in the School course.
- 6.—That the School Apparatus of a well-equipped Institution should include a Museum.

Mrs. Fawcett then called upon Mr. John Macdonald, of the Mission to the Out-door Blind of Glasgow and the West of Scotland.

Mr. Macdonald:—May I be allowed to remark that the following pages were written before the Bill now before Parliament

was made public; this will explain the absence of any reference to that Bill in the paper I am about to submit. I shall commence by stating that the views expressed in the following pages are something more than merely individual ideas. They represent the views of the Directors of the West of Scotland Mission to the Blind, the blind themselves, and to a large extent the views of that portion of the Scotish public taking an interest in their general welfare.

THE PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

By the Education Act of 1872, which provides that every child shall receive an elementary education, and the more recent enactments, by which such education has been made practically free in all the compulsory standards, the State has fully recognised its duty in this important matter. Although the number of blind children of school age is comparatively small—perhaps not more than one in every 3,300 seeing children of the same age—their claim to special attention has been admitted by express enactment in the 69th section of the Scotch Education Act. Unfortunately, this section has been variously interpreted by School Boards and others, often to the disadvantage of the blind, but it is evident that the intention of those who framed it, as well as of those who supported it by petition and otherwise during its passage through Parliament was, to place the blind precisely on the same footing as seeing children in their relation to School Boards. It is to be hoped that an authoritative interpretation of the clause will be forthcoming soon, or the Act amended, if necessary, as recommended in the Royal Commission Report, par. 243.

As any legislation on the subject, which we may expect in the near future at least, is likely to be based on the Royal Commission Report, I will endeavour to follow the lines indicated therein in the few observations I have to offer to the Conference.

The Commissioners state in par. 240—"The recommendations which we make are founded on the general idea, which has been strongly impressed upon us by various witnesses, and by the observations made during the visits of the Commission at home and abroad, that the blind should, as far as possible, be treated like seeing people, and that the object of their education and physical training should be, as far as practicable, to make up for their physical defects, and to train them to earn their livelihood," and they add, "This principle is not only right, but it is politically and economically sound."

Applying this principle to the subject of primary education the Report goes on to say (par 39), "The free intercourse with the seeing gives courage and self-reliance to the blind, and a healthy stimulus which enables them to compete more success-

fully with the seeing in after lifethan those who have been brought up altogether in blind institutions." Accordingly the Board School is recommended "for all those children who have good health" (par 42), and "that it should be enacted beyond all possibility of doubt that it is the duty of every School Board to see that every blind child should attend school in the same way and at the same commencing age as seeing children. The education of these children should be much facilitated by the fact that every parish in Scotland has its School Board, and that every branch of education, from the lowest grades up to the Universities, is under its control" (par. 728).

I cordially endorse these views, and the grounds on which they are based. The education of the blind along with the seeing, so earnestly recommended here, is not by any means new, it has been in operation as an organised system for upwards of 20 years, with the most gratifying results. The objections usually urged against the Board School for the blind are "that the sense of touch and sight differ in this respect, that the former ascends by degrees from the perception of parts to the perception of the whole, whilst the latter views the whole at a glance," and from this simple statement there is drawn as a conclusion that "the blind cannot be instructed in schools destined for the seeing, because the progress of the other children would be retarded by the the slow apprehension of the blind."

Experience, however, has proved that these objections are entirely groundless; and that it is not only practicable, but in many respects preferable to educate the blind in Board Schools rather than in Institutions. This has been amply verified by numerous school teachers who have had practical experience in this work, and also by the educational results obtained. The teacher of a large Board School in Glasgow, replying to the objections just referred to, writes—"Let us take the individual subjects taught and see wherein it holds good that the presence of the blind will retard the progress of the seeing children, or that they are less quick of apprehension than their companions. Let the subjects of instruction be reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, and history with say English literature and mathematics as special subjects. With regard to reading and geography it doubtless holds true to a certain extent that such pupils are at a disadvantage, for whereas in reading the eye travels rapidly and so can grasp a whole phrase at once, the fingers, however keen their touch, read more slowly; but for intelligent comprehension of the matter read they are rather before than behind their fellows; whilst in geography, although they may not be able to point out the places as rapidly, they certainly form, from their embossed maps, a truer conception of the country, and can answer more readily than the others any question relating to

it; in fact, they become incentives rather than hindrances. writing they are on a footing of equality with their fellows. arithmetic, mathematics and grammar, which require the reasoning faculties, they are certainly not less quick in apprehension, nor less rapid in execution than the others, whilst in history they follow the sequence of events with as great relish, and remember them often more readily than their fellows. If we take the only remaining subject of those we mentioned, viz., English literature, it will be patent to all that in the repetition of the required lines and comprehension of their meaning they will be above the average, and so will be anything but a hindrance to the class." testimony is borne by numerous teachers who have had personal experience with blind pupils, all of whom point out wherein it is highly beneficial to the moral tone of a school to have such children mingling with the seeing in the class and in the playground.

Referring to the educational results obtained, it has been our uniform experience that blind children of average ability have been able to compete successfully with the seeing. They take their place in the class as ordinary pupils, and with their special appliances for reading, writing, arithmetic, &c., take part in all the ordinary work of the school, not infrequently carrying off the best prizes. In Glasgow and the West of Scotland there are at present 44 blind children attending various Board Schools, 11 of whom are boarded in the Blind Asylum and the others live at their own homes. Of the 44 on the roll 33 had the requisite attendances last year to be presented for examination, of whom 32 made complete passes in their respective standards—up to and including the ex-sixth. A number of the pupils took first prizes, and four gained bursaries of the annual value of £5 each, tenable for two years, all in open competition with the seeing. Similar results are obtained in other parts of Scotland, and, indeed, wherever the blind get a fair chance at home and at school, it is found that they can hold their own with their seeing classmates.

These are not in any sense selected pupils, but are taken from the ordinary rank and file of blind children. The idea that they require such special treatment in their early training and education as can only be obtained in institutions set apart for the purpose is now well-nigh exploded. Ordinary blind children require the same incentives to work as the seeing: the strongest of these is the active emulation of school life, and the knowledge that their future welfare and power of self-maintenance depends greatly upon their compensating their want of sight by superior intelligence. To shut up such children in an institution, where all their companions are sightless like themselves, and exclude them from all intercourse with the outer world during the very period of life when the mind is most susceptible of impression, is not likely to

develop that superior intelligence so essential to success in after life. Such isolation, if continued through many years, has the effect of producing in their minds distorted and contracted ideas of the thoughts and habits of ordinary society, so that they are generally spoken of as a class with many peculiarities, which have come to be regarded as inseparably connected with the infirmity. It deprives them of the healthy stimulus of open competition with the seeing in ordinary school work and of much useful knowledge which they would acquire through the eyes of their school-fellows; and tends to increase in them a feeling of isolation and dependence which they may never be able to throw off.

Referring again to the Royal Commission Report, par. 50 says, "There must always be some blind who from physical weakness, delicacy of constitution, and other causes, need the fostering care of an institution." I cannot regard physical weakness or delicacy of constitution as valid reasons for sending a child to an institution: such children of all others have a special claim on the tenderness and considerateness that can only be rightly exercised in the bosom of a well-regulated family, and as it is within the family circle—when its functions are properly discharged—that true filial affection, and all the finer qualities of our nature can be best fostered and developed, to remove such children from those benign influences is wrong in principle and pernicious in its effects.

It has been urged, as a further reason why they should be dealt with exceptionally in this respect, that they are poor and their home surroundings unhealthy, morally and physically. That such conditions exist in some cases I frankly admit, but that they apply to the juvenile blind especially as a class is contrary to our experience. The homes of blind children are in all respects exactly similar to the homes of the seeing in the corresponding stations in life. Unlike the adult blind, especially those who are deprived of sight in adult life, there is nothing in their infirmity to alter the social position or affect the general surroundings of the home. If in the case of the seeing such interference can only be justified on the ground of culpable neglect or cruelty on the part of the parents, or incorrigibleness on the part of the children, why should any exception be made in the case of the blind—and more especially such as are physically weak? That many of them are poor is only too true, but that in itself cannot be regarded as a sufficient reason for interfering with the Divine arrangement of the family. The only circumstances that can warrant the removal of a blind child from home are those which are applied to the seeing, and for such exceptional caseswhich can never be very numerous—I would recommend that they be boarded out in respectable families as orphan and deserted children are by the Parochial Boards, or that they be boarded in Blind Institutions and sent to Board Schools for education. This plan has been in operation in the Glasgow Asylum for the Blind for the past two years. The children—about a dozen—live at the institution and attend a Board School in the vicinity, where they are distributed in their respective standards and instructed along with the seeing.

The experiment proved a complete success the first year. Unfortunately, the Directors of the Institution—for reasons best known to themselves—have withdrawn the children from school during the afternoon of each day for special instruction in their own school, with the result, that whereas at the end of the first year all the pupils who had the requisite attendances were presented to H. M. Inspector and all passed in their respective standards; at the end of the second year two girls who had the requisite attendances could not be presented for examination, and one boy, who was presented, failed. That is to say that while exclusively under the Board School teaching, the percentage of passes was 100 per cent., under the divided arrangement the percentage was only 75. The Head Master of the Board School assured me that had the children been allowed to continue all day at school, as before, he is confident the results this year would have been as good as last.

This leads me to call attention to another point in the Royal Commission Report. In par 243 (3) it is recommended that "where the number is too small to form a class (at an elementary school) the School Board, or School Attendance Authority, should have the power, and be required, to send a child to an institution, &c." From what I have just said it will be apparent that I cannot approve of this recommendation, as I believe it would prove detrimental to the progress of the pupils. Divided responsibility in a matter of this kind can never work well, as has been shown in the experiment now being made at the Glasgow Institution.

The system in operation under the London School Board of gathering the blind pupils into centres for special instruction is open to the same objections, in so far as it interferes with the ordinary school work. After the pupils have acquired a thorough knowledge of the Braille and how to work their arithmetic board, they need very little, if any, special instruction which they cannot obtain in their classes in the Board School. No doubt they require assistance and supervision in preparing their home lessons; in the same way as seeing children; but to withdraw them from their classes during the ordinary school hours, for this purpose, places them at a serious disadvantage in competing with their seeing class-mates. The necessity for such a course is said to arise from the inability of the parents or other members of the family to assist or supervise the blind in their use of their special appliances for writing, arithmetic, &c. Such, however, has not

been our experience in Scotland, we seldom fail in finding someone to undertake this duty; but if such a difficulty exist to any extent, the children might be brought together into some convenient class room after school hours and have their lessons prepared for the following day. For many years a system similar to this has been in operation in Glasgow for seeing children whose home surroundings are unfavourable.

These special class rooms or "Day Refuges" are situated at convenient centres in the poorer districts of the city, and are open daily. The children meet in the Refuges in the morning, and after breakfast and worship go to certain Board Schools; at midday they return to dinner, and again after school to supper and prayers, when they go to their homes—in some cases they are assisted with their lessons for the following day. Some such arrangement of this kind, with, say, one hour every afternoon for preparation of home lessons, would, I am confident, meet the case of all the blind who require such assistance without interfering with their attendance at the Board School, and in consequence with higher educational results. From the latest returns of the London School Board, I observe that the average number of blind children under instruction during the year ended Lady Day, 1890, was 122, with an average attendance of 86, and the number of passes were :—First Standard, 9; Second Standard, 11; Third Standard, 15; Fourth Standard 9; and Fifth Standard, 2. Total 46: being 37'70 per cent. of the number on the roll, or 53'48 per cent. of the average attendance. In Glasgow and the West of Scotland with 44 on the roll, and an average attendance of 33, during the year ended 31st December, 1889, the passes were; Infant Department, 5; First Standard, 3; Second, 4; Third, 5; Fourth, 4; Fifth, 7; and Sixth, 4. Total, 32.—Being 68.18 per cent. of the number on the roll, or 97 per cent. of the average attendance.

It is further to be observed that under the London School Board the cost of educating the blind—including special instruction—is £9 10s. 5d. per head per annum, while under the Glasgow School Board the total cost is only £3 17s. 6d. per head per annum—see Royal Commission Report, pars. 227, 229.

I will notice just one other point which deserves special attention, namely, the want of suitable class-books in the embossed type. At present this difficulty is sought to be overcome by various methods, but all more or less unsatisfactorily.

The great diversity of the books in use—in Scotland at least—and which are being frequently changed, renders it practically impossible to have them all stereotyped in Braille, or to keep pace with the frequent changes. From inquiries made at most of the leading School Boards in Scotland I find that only one has adopted

a uniform set of reading books. It appears to me that the simplest and most inexpensive method of providing requisite class books as used in Board Schools would be to establish one or more central depôts for writing out the different books as required, from which the various School Boards would be supplied at fixed rates. The Association might be voluntary, subsidised by Government, or wholly under Government management, or under School Board patronage. Besides meeting the difficulty in question, this would provide suitable employment for a number of blind people as copyists.

The whole tenor of the Royal Commission Report seems to favour the Board School for elementary education unless for the few exceptional cases referred to, and were the recommendations it makes in regard to compulsory education, Government grants, inspection, &c., along with the suggestions which I have here ventured to offer, given effect to, every blind child in the country might then receive a complete elementary education in an easy natural way, and at much less cost than in special or boarding schools. The present educational establishments connected with our Institutions could then be dispensed with, and the funds required for their maintenance be applied to the technical or industrial training of the blind, after they have passed through the ordinary standards at the Board Schools.

P.S.—Since writing the foregoing, the promised Bill "to amend the Law in regard to the Education of the Blind and Deaf-mute children in Scotland" has been issued, and it is gratifying to find that it embodies all the more important recommendations of the Royal Commission. The Bill extends to Scotland only, and is to be construed as one with the Education (Scotland) Acts, 1872 to 1883. It lays the obligation on the School Board to provide for the elementary and technical education of the blind between the ages of five and sixteen years either in a Board School or in some other School or Institution approved of by the Scotch Education Department. Section 5 provides that blindness in itself shall not be deemed a reasonable excuse, within the meaning of Section 9, 10 and 11 of the 1883 Act, for non-attendance at school. It is satisfactory to find that, in regard to payment of fees, for those who from poverty are unable to pay, the duty to do so is transferred from the Parochial Authority to the School Board.

So far as it goes the Bill may be regarded as a fair expression of Scotch opinion on the subject of primary education.

MR. MOLDENHAWER, of Copenhagen, said: That he had come to the Conference, not to speak, but to learn. He considered, however, that the general opinion was that the training of the blind, in special institutions, offered advantages which

could not be obtained elsewhere. A blind child educated in an ordinary school for the seeing might enjoy some advantages, but it would learn much more in an establishment devoted entirely to the education of the blind.

MR. RALPH TAIT, having referred to his being Secretary to Moon's Home Teaching Society, and that the members of that society had the option of reading books either in Moon's or Braille type, said, that in considering schools for blind children we should never forget the sacred word, "home," and added, that the real difficulty was to obtain employment after leaving the Institution. He hoped that one outcome of this Conference would be the opening of our eyes to the importance of doing something to help pupils on leaving Colleges like this, to take a more equal stand with the sighted.

Mr. W. Harris, of Leicester: I have not been able to hear the papers which have been read, nor the remarks made upon them; but, with your permission. I will say a few words on the subject. I venture to offer the remarks chiefly for the use of those present not well acquainted with the subject. I do not undervalue the good work done here, or in other Institutions for the Blind, but would remind the meeting that many of the favourable circumstances, which have led to success at school, are not to be found by the pupils after leaving; such as good sleeping and day rooms, ample supply of good food, regular exercise, bathing, attendance of a doctor when necessary, and especially freedom from care. Let me also remind you that Blind persons who have made a mark in the world were not trained in special schools; they used readers and talkers, and had the help of some friend or companion who could seethe ear is to the Blind the natural inlet for knowledge, as the eye is to the Deaf. These blind persons were helped by wives, children, friends, or even faithful loving servants, who could see. I know a barrister in active practice, who does not use any special type; and I have many letters in my possession written in ordinary hand-writing by a blind person. As to the opinions of the blind on the subject of blindness I am always pleased to have them; but in receiving them one should always compare them with the opinion of those who can see, bearing in mind that the blind cannot possibly realise all the assistance that the sighted get from the use of their eyes. A magistrate can often tell by the look and manner of a person if he is guilty, and a teacher, or school inspector can form a good opinion of a pupil, and the state of a school by the use of his eyes. I have no pet school or type of my own to promote, but I have for about thirty years been actively engaged in helping the blind, and collecting and disseminating information on the subject of the blind. I have in my hand a re-print of a book, by Haüy, the first person who

printed books for the blind. It was written more than one hundred years ago, in 1786; also an illustrated book, by Guillie, written in 1817, which show what the blind could then do. But the point is not what the blind can do, but what will be useful to them. With regard to Primary Education: in my opinion it would be best to place the schools for the blind, and the blind in ordinary schools, under the inspection of the ordinary School Inspector of Her Majesty, and the education should be as nearly as possible the same as for the sighted, the best and most complete that can be given, and only the best of teachers should be employed. The teachers should be thoroughly experienced certificated sighted teachers, who do not require anyone to help them, as does a blind teacher, who cannot possibly do all that a sighted one can do. And pupils should not be compelled to stay after having passed the necessary standard. Success in this work depends very much on the supply of money, for, without plenty of money, good teachers, etc., cannot be provided. I trust that the Government will see that every school has the best of teachers and teaching apparatus. The blind can be taught to do almost anything, but we have to consider whether the produce of their labour, be it music, or articles made by their hands, is marketable. Does anyone want blind musicians? Is there a demand for goods made by the blind? One more question: Do blind people employ the blind in their own concerns? If not, why should they expect the sighted to do so? Schools are intended for the good of the pupils, and not to provide employment for blind teachers.

Mr. Carter, of Sheffield: The paper which has been read by Mr. Macdonald is confined, I understand, entirely to the Elementary Education of the Blind, and the question resolves itself into this: Is it desirable or not that the recommendations of the Royal Commission with regard to the Education of the Blind should be carried out, or shall we endeavour to oppose those recommendations in favour of something else? Mr. Macdonald suggested in his paper that the Elementary Education of the Blind should cease at the age of ten, and the Technical Instruction then be commenced. The Commissioners in their report recommend that the Education of the Blind in the Elementary Schools should commence at five, and that the Industrial Training should commence at from twelve to fourteen in the Technical Schools. I am inclined to think that Mr. Macdonald is right in limiting the age for Elementary Education to ten, and in coming to that conclusion, I have been guided by the experience of blind persons who have come under my notice. It would be beneficial to the young blind to commence their education at an early age. For the most part in our Institutions the youngest are nine or ten years old and a large number of blind children under that age are really receiving no education at all. I think it, therefore, exceedingly desirable that the recommendation of the Royal Commission, that the entire responsibility of the Elementary Education of the very young Blind be thrown upon the School Board, should be carried out.

MR. JAMES SIME, of Edinburgh: I do not wish to make a long speech, but merely to make a few remarks, and propose a motion for adoption by the Conference, in order to bring things to a point. Of course, I might have written a paper. and been allowed twenty minutes for the reading of it, as our friend Mr. Macdonald was. In that case I could have gone fully into the question as Mr. Macdonald did. However, the ten minutes allowed to a speaker will serve my purpose. I wish, then, to point out that all the questions raised by Mr. Macdonald have been discussed in Edinburgh and Glasgow, not only in general, but in particular. Sometimes we have had children admitted into the Blind Asylum at Edinburgh, the very boys and girls who have been referred to by Mr. Macdonald and his friends, as capital specimens of what Blind children can be taught. So we understand all the circumstances under which Mr. Macdonald's paper was written. If any special reply is needed, I shall leave it to the teacher of the Blind School of Edinburgh, who is a thoroughly efficient man, and we could not have a better teacher. He can speak about these things, and about pupils who come out of Special Schools, when compared with those in Board Schools. I represent here my fellow Directors on the Board of the Royal Blind Asylum and School. Edinburgh. Our sole desire is the well-being of the boys and girls afflicted with blindness. If the best results can be attained from education in the Board Schools, educate the blind there. But, first, let us make sure that that is the best system. We do not think it is the best. I am giving you not the opinion of mere amateurs, but of men who have devoted their whole life to the subject, and to teaching. I do not know whether Mr. Macdonald was trained as a teacher; but, judging from his paper, I should think not. I am giving you the opinion of my fellow Directors, gentlemen, who represent all classes of the community. In the meantime, we cannot do better than adhere to the present system of a Special School in educating these unfortunate boys and girls. If a better can be presented to us, we will adopt it at once. We are also in accord with the sentiments expressed in the Report of the Royal Commission. Apparently, there were two streams of thought in the Commission, and you know that whenever anything of that sort takes place in England and Scotland, it ends in a compromise. This is what they have done here; they say, in one place send the

children to the Board Schools, and let the weak and sickly ones go to Special Schools. In another place they seem to prefer Special Schools for all. Now, we, in Edinburgh, hold that if it came to a question of sending a blind child to a Board School or leaving him at home, it would certainly be better to send him to a Board School. Blind boys are at present, sometimes, sent to our Board Schools. What to do? I asked one not long ago. He said, "I go because my brother goes." "Why do you go with your brother?" "To keep him out of mischief," was the reply. Send a blind boy or girl to a school, wherever, or whatever it may be, rather than let him go about the streets. However, to put him in a Special School like this, where he will be taught by those who love him, I say that is better still, in view of the superiority of the training he will receive. Now, while you have these three things; nothing at all, a Board School, and a Special School, with every appliance that can be obtained, I do not think that men who have the interest of these blind children at heart, would hesitate to give them the best education and training possible; and I, therefore, beg to move the following resolution: "That this Conference, while recognising that compulsory education of the blind in the ordinary classes for the seeing in Board Schools, may be in many cases of the utmost advantage, declines to accept it as a substitute for education and maintenance in Special Schools or Institutions, under National inspection; but regards the recommendations of the Royal Commission in their Report (Sections 50, 241, 243), as well adapted to meet all the circumstances of the cases that may arise."

MADAME VERD, head of the Girls' Department of l'Institution Nationale des jeunes Aveugles de Paris, stated that the
experience of this Institution, spread over a period of more
than 100 years, was, that it was a mistake to employ sighted
teachers in blind schools. Several attempts had been made to
replace the blind professors by sighted ones, but the results had
been invariably unsatisfactory. If a sighted person could be
found possessing the same peculiar recommendations as a blind
person for teaching the blind, he would be a perfect teacher; but
such are seldom met with.

Mr. Martin, Edinburgh: Allow me to quote to you from a letter sent from one of our friends, Mr. Stoddart, Manager of the Glasgow Blind Asylum. "I was astonished to notice Mr. Macdonald's name as first on the list, as we were informed he was not to be at the Conference. I am sorry that I have no opportunity of replying to his paper. I feel sure assertions will be made by him regarding the success of School Board children in Glasgow, which would be greatly cut down by the remarks I could make." I may say that at one time I held the same opinions as Mr. Macdonald, but at that time the Schools for the

Blind were about as antiquated as some of the ideas I have heard expressed here to-day. The children were then allowed to grow up in mental, as well as physical, darkness. I cannot deny that a number of blind persons have succeeded, who have received their education in ordinary schools, but they were of that class who will carry themselves forward in spite of obstacle, it was not the training, but their own determination to succeed, no matter what obstacles were encountered by them. To introduce as a hard and fast rule, as our friend is endeavouring to introduce, that all blind children, except sickly and weakly ones, should be sent to the Board Schools, I beg leave to say is nothing more or less than absurd. I believe that the Scotch Bill, which has passed the Second Reading, and will soon become law, leaves it open to experience to settle whether the blind should be sent to Special Schools. I feel certain that Institutes, specially arranged and adapted, as our Institution in Edinburgh is specially arranged and adapted, and the Institution in which we have the honour to assemble, are the kind to which blind children should and will be sent. I should like to ask: How came it that when the Directors of the Institution at Glasgow sent their children to an Ordinary School, the Edinburgh Blind School had so many applications from those who found separate instruction necessary? How comes it that we have so many of these children, who actually went to the Board Schools, now in our walls? Even some of their prizemen. We have one of them; he took part in a debate amongst the pupils at our Institution a short time ago on this subject, and the finding was, "That it was utter nonsense to expect that in the Ordinary Schools the blind could get the education they required." I think it is not possible to over-rate the advantages of the Kindergarten system. I wish only we could afford more teachers in this system, to put it in proper order. We have been talking to-day, as if all our children were blind from birth. We must not arrange a system to treat them all as if blind from infancy. One more point with regard to the question of schools. These blind children are destined to various employments, some musical, some industrial. Who is to make the selection? Dr. Campbell has established an elementary section here, and brings in the children so that he shall be able to select. He has done this expressly with the object of seeing if there is musical talent in the child, and if there is not, then he will allow it to gravitate to the Industrial department. I do not myself believe that the benefits accruing to blind children in Ordinary Schools are anything like what they are represented to be. As for the children under Her Majesty's Inspectors: Is it possible for such men to deal with blind children in the same way as others? I testify to what I have seen, and know that they are allowed to pass with a leniency that would not be allowed to sighted children.

Mr. Keir, Aberdeen: I have listened with great pleasure to the papers and discussion on this important subject. I would say that I am here representing a number of blind persons in Aberdeen, who, also, are an Association there. Now, with all due respect and deference to the statements which have been made by the two Edinburgh gentlemen, who have preceded me. I must give my opinion, as well as the opinion of workers in the Edinburgh Blind Asylum. The Education of the Blind has been a subject to which we, in Aberdeen, have given great attention, and it is long since we arrived at the conclusion that it is best to send the blind to school with the seeing. I would just wish to produce one or two reasons for our arriving at such a conclusion. We have learned from experience that Special Schools tend very much to produce special habits—demoralising habits—which cling to one in after life. There is no doubt about it. The grouping of blind children together produces habits which would not be contracted otherwise. I speak from experience. I say that the education of a blind child in a Board School fits it for the battle of life in after years. There is no doubt about this: that it infuses into the sighted an idea of the wants and necessities of the blind, while the blind, in their turn, acquire a knowledge of the opinions and ways of their sighted brethren. If we agree to send the blind children to school with the sighted, I claim the right of asserting that, although handicapped to a certain extent. the blind ought not to receive different treatment, from that accorded to our seeing friends. I have listened to Mr. Macdonald's paper, and I have gained the impression that he is in favour of sending a child to a Technical School from ten to fourteen. I contend that it should remain at school until it finishes its elementary education, after which it might then be sent to a Technical School or Workshop. Now, Mr. Martin, or Mr. Sime stated, that he had studied the matter for a long time. I daresay he has. I have done so, also, although I am not an old man. On a recent occasion a Conference of the Blind was held in Edinburgh, which I attended. There were three resolutions submitted, and carried. I will refer to one. It was in the following terms: "That in the opinion of this Conference, all blind children ought to be sent to Board Schools, and educated in the same way as seeing children." That resolution was passed at that Conference, which represented the four principal towns in Scotland. Now, in regard to the Physical training, which has been so much spoken about in connection with special institutions, I would like just to mention that Physical training has now become a recognised thing in the Board Schools. It must be remembered that to get all the blind children transported to one particular point is a great inconvenience. I say that institutions are not to be found distributed over the country, and that the severing of the family ties so dear to all, is quite enough to destroy and blight the prospect of any child, for a time, at least. It is essential to the well-being of the blind child to allow it to remain at home. I have no reason to doubt, that in some of the Institutions, the managers do the best possible for the blind children; but, it is not for a moment to be supposed that they can have the same feeling towards the children as the children's own parents. Now, one word in regard to the outcome of the training given in special Institutions. I know, for a fact, that in one of our best Institutions—I mean Edinburgh—a pupil received a good—a very good education. What did he turn it to, do you suppose? He left the school and went to the Industrial Department; he was consigned to cutting up wood for a livelihood. Now, I am glad to hear Mr. Sime say, that he is prepared to adopt my principle if it will work better. With regard to that, I would say, that of forty-three witnesses, examined before the Royal Commission, thirty-two gave it as their opinion that the Board Schools were the best Institutions for Educating the Blind; the other eleven against it were all, more or less, connected with Special Institutions. I would close my remarks, by moving an Amendment in the following terms; "That this Conference resolves that, in ordinary circumstances, blind children should be educated in the Board Schools, the Boards providing any special appliances found necessary."

This Amendment was seconded by Mr. James Townson, of Accrington.

MR. BUCKLE: Referring to the remarks made by the previous speaker against Special Blind Schools, I should like to say, that if training in such an Institution has produced such a specimen as our friend, who has just been speaking, it is indeed a recommendation for them. Apart, however, from that, I am speaking on this question from the point of view of one connected with a Blind Institution; and, therefore, may be said by some, to be speaking from interested motives, still, I have had twenty-one years' experience. Previously, I was one of Her Majesty's Assistant-Inspectors of schools, and I know what is to be found in the best Elementary schools of the country, and I have no hesitation in saying, speaking not only of the school I have charge of, but of every Blind Institution, which I have seen, that in the best of the Blind Schools in the kingdom, the blind children are receiving a better education than the seeing children are receiving in ordinary schools. I have always held that the system adopted among the blind children, is a system worthy of adoption by the seeing. For, with us, the Education of the Blind does not cease at the age of Fourteen or Fifteen—when the child begins to think-but goes on to Seventeen or Eighteen; and, therefore, you have the education very much more thorough. Mr. Smith, M.P., for one division of Liverpool, is the promoter of

a Bill for Continuation Schools, in which sighted children would be educated part of every day up to the age of Seventeen or Eighteen; and, now there is a talk of upsetting this plan in the Blind schools. Then, again, it is lamentable to hear some people talk of the benefits of blind children staying at home. The last child we received into our school was a little child of ten, who had been left at home with her old grandmother. She dared not walk from one side of the room to the other, without someone going with her. I could give numberless similar instances of the sad results of the mistaken kindness of home. The same complaints prevail on the Continent and in America. Take any of the blind children going to the day schools, in London, at the present time. Ask them who cleaned their boots. I guarantee that in nearly every case, the mother, or brother had done it. In a Special School the child does such little things for itself. I give this as one instance of the way in which we endeavour to teach self dependence. You talk about a Blind Institution destroying the independence of its inmates. Talking about the severance of home ties, to me it is ridiculous to hear gentlemen giving utterance to, what I call, sentimental nonsense. They send their own sons to Eton, Harrow, Rugby, or other public schools, in order to give them that character for independence and pluck, which is so much an English distinguishing feature, and forsooth the blind boy, who has a double need of such character, they would retain "in the bosom of the family." Mr. Carter has given us the opinion of one blind man on this question. Let me give another. The other day at a meeting of our blind workmen this question was mooted, and in speaking of it, one of them, who had attended the school only as a day scholar, said, that he considered that that arrangement was the great mistake of his education. He felt he had lost much by such an arrangement. I may further add that all our blind workmen are of opinion, that to change education from the Special Institution to the Ordinary School, would be a decided mistake. I have much pleasure in seconding the Resolution.

DR. CAMPBELL informed the Members of the Conference, that if any of them were not acquainted with the Bill now before Parliament, they would be supplied on application with a free copy.

M. Syme, of l'Institution Nationale of Paris, said: That pupils had occasionally been sent to that Institution when ten years old. As a consequence, although they had previously been to ordinary schools, their education had to be commenced almost completely afresh.

Mr. Plater, Birmingham: I am very much pleased to see that the Blind are defending their own cause. I was afraid that

the cause for the blind was going to be advocated right through this morning by the sighted only; while I congratulate the blind speaker, Mr. Keir, on his eloquence, I think he goes wide of the mark, when speaking of the practical education of blind children. One of the most important things in the education of the blind. is the cultivation of their perceptive powers, and to do that it needs a special training, which can only be got inside an Institution for the Education of the Blind. I believe in mixing blind children with the sighted; it familiarises them with the ways of the world, and rubs off some of their peculiar habits. But I think, that if you let children go to the Board School, the Government would be so backward in supplying the special maps, &c., necessary for the education of the blind, that they would lose a lot of time for want of means of obtaining a proper education. Now, I say, that these means are more easily obtained in an Institution specially for the blind. I think, also, that children when blind are frequently the pet of an affectionate mother; they are indulged at home, and consequently the power to fight in the battle of life is drawn out of them by such mistaken kindness. One advantage of children being mixed with the sighted, is the increased energy it cultivates, and they obtain a more general knowledge of things around them. my own case, I lost my sight at a more advanced age than now under discussion - at nineteen. I had a most affectionate mother, and it almost broke her heart to part with me when I left home and went to the Birmingham Institution. When she was so sad, I said, "Mother, in the ordinary course of things you will die many years before me. If you part with me now, your burden will be lightened. If you keep me at home, your death will be a hard one; seeing your only son unprovided for, and left to the charity of the world. Therefore, let me go now and learn a trade, so that when you die, you may know that your son is in a fair way to provide for himself." At twenty-four years of age I started in business with one solitary sovereign, and today I am a large basket manufacturer. I hope you will not take this as a piece of egotism on my part, but I say this to encourage you in your good work, and I add, that if I had not gone into a Blind Institution I should not be in the position I am to-day. I have the honour of being connected with about twenty religious and social Committees in Birmingham. This is the outcome of my going away from home, and the energy that lay dormant in me was brought out by the training I received at that Institution for the Blind. As an example of the possibilities of the blind, I may add, that during the year ending last June 30th, I sent out from my warehouse 24,000 baskets besides other goods, bought in considerably over 200 tons of willows and other material, and my receipts during the same period were £ 5,000.

Mr. Keir's Amendment having been put to the Meeting and lost, the original Resolution, proposed by Mr. Sime, was carried almost unanimously.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mrs. Fawcett for

presiding, and the Conference adjourned until 3 p.m.

JULY 22nd (Afternoon Meeting).

The chair was taken at 3 p.m. by the Right Hon. and Right Rev. the LORD BISHOP OF LONDON, who said—

We have to hear a paper which is to be given to us by Mr. Carter of Sheffield; the subject is "State Aid." This is one of the most difficult questions to handle in relation to any subject of this kind, and there is always in this country a great fear of introducing State Aid too soon, partly because it paralyses voluntary work and individual effort. Some think that it is taking business out of their hands, partly because it so paralyses the efforts of those who ought to do things for themselves, that they cease to do them as soon as they find it is possible to get other people to do these things for them. The case of the blind however stands on a very different footing from every other case that can be named. In the first place, although it is very necessary indeed to encourage the action of all voluntary work, on the other hand it is excep. tionally difficult to get volunteers to do this work, which is more heavy than we can put on their shoulders. A very large number that are suffering from this are children in the lower walks of life. and children of parents who cannot do anything for their children. beyond that generally done for those who have full possession of all senses and faculties. When it comes to those who require special training, in a very large number of instances the result is a very general neglect of the teaching and training of the blind and there is a very large number who might be very much better for training suitable to their own case, and they do not get it because their parents are too ignorant to give it and too poor to get it for them. If any people may be induced to slacken their efforts because they rely on the assistance of the State, it is always possible to prevent that end by taking proper precautions for the purpose and, meanwhile, it is very easy to point out the enormous benefits which have been conferred by the Institutions which have derived their existence from various sources, and which the State might very well assist. But all these matters might very well be put before you in Mr. Carter's paper, and we shall hear from him what he has to say, either on one side or the other. After the paper there will be a discussion, and I shall be obliged to follow the rule laid down by the Conference itself. It is not a rule made by the chairman of this meeting. The rule is that no speaker shall speak for more than 10 minutes; therefore, at the end of nine minutes, I shall warn the speaker that he has but one minute, and at the end of 10 minutes I strike the bell and make the speaker sit down, even in the middle of a sentence.

Mr. W. R. Carter, of the Institution for the Blind at Sheffield, read a paper on—

STATE AID TO BLIND INSTITUTIONS.

To those who have hitherto undertaken the education and training of the blind the question of State aid to the institutions which public benevolence has provided for this afflicted class has become of urgent importance; because upon its early solution depends the future of at least the schools forming part of such institutions.

It is remarkable that, although under the Elementary Education Acts the Education Department is made responsible for securing that "efficient and suitable provision" is made for the elementary education of all the children resident in a school district, the Department has not since the Act of 1870 treated the education of the blind as compulsory; so that with few exceptions those who by reason of their defect must need the best help that can be rendered them have been left dependent upon the institutions for their education.

As the majority of the blind who are educated in institutions belong to the poorer section of the community for whom the State provides elementary education, it seems to follow that either these institutions must be recognised, aided and inspected by the State, or that the blind must be specially provided for in our public elementary schools.

It has generally been considered, not only in our own country but also in Continental countries, in the United States, and in our Colonies, that the defect of blindness renders the sufferers unsuitable for education in the ordinary public schools, and consequently special schools have been provided for the blind; and in most states such special schools are aided from the public purse. It is generally admitted that the blind are at a great disadvantage in competition with the sighted; and, as Dr. Armitage urged in examination before the Royal Commission, the fact of the appointment of that Commission shews that the State considers that the blind are an exceptional class and require exceptional legislation.

At the time of the investigations made by the Royal Commission on the Blind, &c., there were in the United Kingdom nine schools for resident pupils and 26 institutions being combinations of workshops and schools educating 1618 blind pupils, including 11 in the Home at Bath; and the School Boards at Bradford, Cardiff, Glasgow, London, and Sunderland were also providing education for 194, making a total of 1812 under instruction. But according to the last census there were in the United Kingdom 2.630 blind between the ages of five and fifteen, viz.—in Scotland 210, in England and Wales 1,710, and in Ireland 710. As the special schools for the blind retain some pupils above the age of 15 there must be a considerable number of blind of school age, probably many between the ages of five and ten, who are not receiving education; although some of the special schools are capable of providing for many more resident pupils than are at present being educated therein.

The Government has recently been urged by the representatives of institutions to put the education of the blind on at least an equal footing with that of the sighted, and to extend to them the advantages of the Education Acts with such modifications and further assistance as the conditions required; and to grant State aid to those schools and institutions which are willing to accept State inspection; and also to aid the special technical and industrial training of the blind, whether children or adults.

The question therefore arises, is it desirable in the interests both of the blind and the public—(1) that the existing resident schools and institutions for the blind shall continue to be utilised for giving elementary and technical education to those who are deprived of sight? and (2) that for these purposes such schools and institutions shall receive State aid.

In discussing the question it should be remembered that under the existing condition of things an institution cannot be required to receive any child for instruction, and that the parents of a blind child cannot be required to part with the custody of their child in order that it may be educated in an institution.

It has been contended that the isolation of the blind from the sighted is detrimental to the former; that it "leaves them a prey to their own delusions and distorted ideas, fosters uncouth and singular habits, often confirmed beyond cure, and in a great measure completely unfits them for association with the sighted, and the due performance of the future duties of life."

Evidence was given before the Royal Commission that the teaching of the blind children with the sighted was advantageous to both; that it developes in the blind cheerfulness, courage, and self-reliance, and has also a refining influence on the sighted, giving them almost unconsciously the idea of helping those who are not quite so well able to help themselves, and that it results in sympathy, courtesy, and kindness.

An intelligent blind man, who received his earliest training in his village school, and at the age of eleven went to an Institution, where he remained for about three years, expresses his opinion, that the greatest benefit to be derived by the blind child from his compulsory attendance at an ordinary public school would be "the heightening of his vitality through his mingling with so many other children of all sorts and sizes. Moreover, he would be growing up in direct contact with his own generation; and, thereby, not only learning much of the world, but letting the world learn of himself." And he asks, "Is not much of the prejudice against blind people due to the fact, that the world knows little of them?"

On the other hand, it is maintained that a good residential school for the blind is better for them than an ordinary public elementary school, inasmuch as they require technical instruction. Moreover, that the physical condition of the blind is lower than that of the sighted, and requires the fostering care of an institution.

The Cologne Congress of the Instructors and Friends of the Blind, held in 1888, adopted the following principles, viz:

- 1. "All young blind, as soon as capable of receiving instruction, should be received into special Institutions, in which the methods of education and instruction are arranged so as to overcome the bodily and mental defects resulting from blindness, and to train them for human intercourse, and for earning a livelihood, according to the acknowledged experience and principles of blind education.
- "In every state a sufficient number of Blind Institutions should be erected, and maintained to accommodate all blind children capable of education.
- 3. "Until blind children can be received into such institutions they should be compelled to attend the ordinary Elementary School, but neither the Elementary School, nor special classes for the blind attached to such schools, should be substituted for the Special School.
- 4. "It is desirable that the attendance of blind children at Blind Institutions should be regulated by a special law."

The Royal Commissioners in their Report recommend:

- "That the blind should, as far as possible, be treated like seeing people, and that the object of their education and physical training should be, as far as practicable, to make up for their physical defects, and to train them to earn their livelihood.
- "That the provisions of the Education Acts be extended to (them), and that the compulsory attendance at a school or institution be enforced from five to sixteen.

- "That their education should commence at five in the infant department, and after passing through the ordinary standards, the technical or industrial training should begin at from twelve to fourteen in an institution or school.
- "It is only in the exceptional cases of physical weakness, or where the number is too small to form a class, that the Commissioners recommend that the Elementary Education should be given in an institution. In these special cases they think the School Board, or School Attendance Authority, should have the power, and be required to send a child to an institution, and to contribute to his education and maintenance, such grant as would be equivalent to the contributions now allowed to be paid by Guardians. With regard to the adult blind, and those who have become blind from twenty-one to fifty, the Commissioners recommend that they should equally receive help from the School Authority to learn a trade, and to read some raised type, in the same way as if they were under twenty-one; or, if they have passed through an institution, the old pupils should be assisted and supervised, and that it should be the duty of Inspectors of Institutions to ascertain what supervision is exercised, and to report accordingly.

"The Commissioners further recommend, that the charitable funds liberated from educational purposes be otherwise applied for the benefit of the blind connected with the institution to which they belong, under a scheme to be approved of by the Charity Commissioners."

Already Bills have been introduced into Parliament to amend the law in regard to the Education of the Blind in Scotland, and in England and Wales. The Scotch Bill provides that if the parent of a blind child, between five and sixteen years of age, is, from poverty, unable to pay for such child's education, the School Board of the parish in which the parent resides, shall provide out of the school fund, at rates to be approved of by the Scotch Education Department, for the efficient Elementary Education of such child in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and for his industrial training, either in a school belonging to such School Board, or in some other school or institution approved of by the Scotch Education Department; and where such school or institution is situated in any parish other than that in which the parent resides, the School Board is required to provide for the boarding out of the child therein, or at some place in the neighbourhood thereof approved of by the School Board, and for the transit of such child to or from such school or institution.

The Bill also empowers the School Board, with the consent of the Scotch Education Department, to contribute towards, or itself undertake the establishment, building, alteration, and management of a school for the education of blind children, and the purchase of land required for such school, and the support of the inmates thereof.

The English Bill makes the Education of the Blind compulsory, and imposes upon the School Authority the duty of enabling blind children in its district, who are not idiots and imbeciles, and for whose Elementary Education efficient and suitable provision is not otherwise made, to obtain such education in some school or institution certified by the Education Department as suitable for that purpose.

Every such certified school is to be inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Power is given to the School Authority to board out a child for the purpose of its obtaining Elementary Education. The Authority is also empowered to provide school accommodation for the blind where an attendance order is made; if the parent of a blind child does not select a school which is reasonably available, the Court may order that the child attend such certified school or institution willing to receive the child as the Court thinks expedient.

The Education Department is enabled to give aid from the Parliamentary grant to a certified school or institution to such amount, and on such conditions as may be directed by, or in pursuance of the minutes of the department in force for the time being.

The application of the Act is permissive, but not compulsory between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, and the power of Boards of Guardians to send blind children to school is to cease, except as to children who are idiots or imbeciles, or who are resident in a workhouse, or whose parents are in receipt of parish relief, or have been deserted by their parents.

The Bill does not deal with technical instruction, and there is no provision in either of the Bills for those who become blind in adult life.

It will be seen that the Bills before Parliament come very far short of carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and it is desirable that the opinion of the present Conference with regard to them should be expressed.

It is not only desirable that the responsibility for providing Elementary Education for the Blind should be transferred from the Guardians to the Education Authority; but that the recommendations of the Royal Commission respecting Technical Education, both for the young blind and for those who become blind in adult life, should be carried out; and that for these

purposes assistance should be given by the Education Authority to the special schools and institutions.

It seems essential that such schools and institutions should be maintained for the young blind who are physically weak. Suitable and regular diet, physical training, and proper medical attendance must be provided in addition to elementary education, and technical instruction is absolutely necessary, if they are to be made useful and self-supporting in after life, and technical instruction can be best given in the institutions.

If, therefore, the blind are an exceptional class, and the institutions are needful to fit them for life, it is surely incumbent upon the State to aid the institutions, though such aid may involve exceptional legislation.

An important advantage to be derived from State aid will be State inspection.

Mr. Dymond, principal of the Ontario Institution for the Blind, who claims to be personally familiar with the working of charitable institutions in the mother-country, considers: "The periodical visits of an experienced inspector, well-informed on all matters of actual importance, most valuable." The Committees who govern our charitable institutions cannot perform the duties of an inspector experienced in his particular work.

It appears to me that in asking for State aid, and inspection of our Educational Institutions for the Blind, we shall be promoting the interests of those whom we are striving to fit for their unequal struggle in the battle of life, and at the same time be considering the public interest.

Dr. Campbell: I should like to make a few remarks with regard to the paper just read. In America, I am glad to say, everything is provided; our institutions for the blind are excellent. A blind child is educated free. With regard to the Bill at present before Parliament, I consider it takes away more than it gives, and while I should be very sorry to oppose anything proposed for the good of the blind, I think we should examine the Bill carefully. At 16 the blind boy or girl is not prepared to go into the world. Nine-tenths of the blind are poor, and if they are not provided with sufficient education and training, they must ultimately become a burden on the rates, or on charity. At present, Boards of Guardians have the power to assist, not only blind children in obtaining an education, but to give aid even to the adult blind while learning a trade. If we take away all power from the Guardians, and only allow the School Authorities to give assistance up to the age of 16, I maintain that the loss is greater than the gain to the blind as a class. Boards of Guardians are willing as a rule to assist the blind; therefore, if you take away this power from the Guardians

it might not be the best thing, and I think that we ought to protest against it. I would much prefer that the Bill in question should be lost, rather than it should pass in its present form.

Mr. Buckle: Your Lordship will not be aware that in some respects the subjects which Mr. Carter has brought before us, have been already discussed this morning; this accounts for the apparent indifference of some of the members about getting But there are some points where I disagree with Dr. Campbell on the subject of Government Education. We ought to insist very strongly on the needs of Government Grants with regard to Technical Education. I put it simply on the ground of asking Government to do for the blind what they are already doing for the seeing. I dare say that most of you are aware that Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Art in this country have grants in connection with their special Scientific and Art Teaching. Well, these grants are made by Parliament as so much expenditure on the part of the State for placing our Artisans in the position of Artisans of other countries. In other words, these grants are given to make our Artisans better workmen. Are we then asking what is unfair if we ask Government, or the Nation if you like, to give us some grants to make our blind folks better workmen? But Government have gone further. In the last Session of Parliament a Technical Education Bill was passed, enabling Corporations or other Local Authorities to pay out of the local rates sums of money, under certain conditions, to such institutions to promote Technical Education. So that seeing young men may receive aid in preparing them for life from the Education Department, from the Science and Art Department, and from Corporations, why should not the blind be so helped? I maintain that Government ought to do at least as much for the blind. We are only asking what is fair, in asking them to do even more. With regard to the period to be devoted to the mental education, there should not be a hard and fast line drawn. For instance, a youth who has had a little education when he comes to us, and thus had his mind stirred up, and is gifted with good physical energy, can soon learn the trade of basket-making, and he can go out well prepared at eighteen years of age. But he will be the exception. Many are not by far so well endowed. They must have a longer period allowed them—say to twenty or twenty-one, for education and training in fact, allow them the time you allow the seeing, whose apprentice age is from fourteen or fifteen to twenty or twenty-one. I am certainly of opinion that we ought to ask Government to to do something for the industrial training as well as for the education of the blind.

DR. Armitage: However divided in opinion we were this morning, this afternoon we seem to be unanimous. We must

emphasise this point, making it perfectly clear that the blind of the United Kingdom, and the teachers and friends of the blind, by a very large majority, are in favour of the State aiding the technical, as well as the elementary education of the blind, and I think that the reason of this must be obvious to anyone who knows the conditions of the blind after leaving school. It has been proved by experience, both in this and all other countries where the blind have been educated, that if they leave a school, say at fourteen or sixteen, and go out into the world to shift for themselves, they fail in a great proportion of cases, and a blind boy or girl leaving a special institution for the blind, and still more an elementary day class at sixteen, will certainly not succeed in life; and that being so, the whole of the trouble and expense of educating the blind pupil up to sixteen is thrown away, and that I think is the strongest argument that we can offer the Government for continuing the education up to the time in which the blind can really start in life for themselves. It was most unfortunate that the Royal Commission having started for the blind should have had other classes tacked on to it. The result has been a certain confusion in the recommendations. Now it is perfectly true that with the deaf, if you give them a good elementary education, and especially if they are taught to speak, and lip-read, if they leave at sixteen, having learnt to communicate with the outer world, they can go into any employment for which they are fitted. A deaf man who can speak and lip-read, is not excluded from an office, or from any work which the deaf and dumb follow. With the blind it is entirely different. A blind boy educated up to the age of sixteen, if he leaves the school, must be apprenticed to some trade, just as the deaf are, but although employers have no objection to take the deaf as apprentices, they will not take the blind. There are good reasons for this, it is sufficient to point out the fact, and therefore, if a blind boy or girl after the age of sixteen does not receive his or her technical training in a special institution, they do not receive it at all, and must necessarily fail. They therefore have to receive public or private charity all the days of their life. The whole of the previous work has been thrown away; therefore, I should hope that this Conference will express a very strong opinion that the education of the blind to be of any use must not terminate at sixteen. I should say generally that it ought to go on to twenty-one.

MR. R. TAIT, said: That all the teachers of the Home Teaching Society were blind, and that he had had considerable experience with regard to the adult blind, and referred to a case in which a person was unable to secure a pension because her income was not under £20 a year; but that if it had been only £19 19s. 6d. she would have been eligible. He also mentioned that a pension

had been withdrawn from a man as soon as he was employed on the Home Teaching Society. He thought that grants should be made to adults, as he understood was advocated by Mr. Buckle.

Mr. Buckle: I am sorry that Mr. Tait should have misunderstood me. I did not mean to recommend the use of the money for the adults.

REV. CANON NELIGAN: I did not intend to speak here. I came to learn and be better equipped for our work in Ireland; but some ideas floated into my mind as I was listening to the other speakers. Let me then give them out to you. I.-We ought not to narrow the thinking of the blind into one monotonous line of thought and life. One sense is lost, but four remain, and it would be wise to follow our Lord's plan. and try to get one platform on which we could meet in mutual sympathy and intelligent good will—respecting each others qualities, and not despising the afflicted one. A great difficulty with the blind is to take them out of themselves, conserve their self-respect, and induce them to look into their temporal and eternal future, hopefully, brightly, and calmly. Now, I fear that the system of making them crave for help through Institutions, or to go into the Poorhouse, is very lowering and demoralizing. Begging for help through a charity does not elevate; living for any time in a Poorhouse does not purify the spirit or stimulate one's faculties to industry. I never like to find a blind person absorbed into a Poorhouse; and yet in Ireland, unless a blind person first becomes an inmate in such, the Guardians cannot legally subsidise any institution for their support, nor even then, unless they are within a certain age. I hold that the blind have a paramount claim on the State for assistance. They have not, as a rule, lost their sight through dissipation or their own misconduct, and they have a right to say to their Natural or State Protector, help me to work and do all I can with my other four faculties to earn my bread and support myself, and not remain a drifting burthen on the community. The question of State Inspection is important, and needs careful and delicate adjustment. In Ireland the Religious question increases the difficulty, for our institutions are, and must be, Denominational; but I don't see why each should not be subsidised according to their respective work each year; and, of course, after visiting by a Government Inspector, the Educational and Industrial Department ought to be carefully stimulated and inspected. public charities should be conducted so as to give confidence to the public. Where real solid good is being done, the more light falling on the system, the happier and better for all. So far. therefore, as I can see, I would recommend State Aid, and State Inspection; but on "the Denominational System" in Ireland. Some

of the speakers dwelt on the importance of making the blind "independent." Well, I don't believe in the independence of any human being, blind or sighted; talking thus is cruel to the blind, and misleading. We are all linked into each other, and inter-dependent, but never independent; "No man liveth or dieth to himself." Self-respect and peace of mind from the consciousness of right motives, and industrial habits are essential. Cringing and crawling to patronage demoralizes. Taking a living from others and giving nothing back in return to society is dishonourable; but I never yet met a man who did not need a helping hand, or who could not give one. Circumstances may vary, but the principle of mutual help is one of life and love and moral beauty.

DR. CAMPBELL: In America we do not limit the age. We say the State must give aid during a certain number of years, seven, eight, or nine years, according to circumstances.

MR. PINE: I do not propose to take up your time more than a few minutes; but permit to say, that I regard our meeting together in this way for the discussion of these important subjects to be of the very greatest advantage to the great cause we all have so much at heart. I should like to compliment Mr. Carter on his admirable paper on this question of State Aid. I thoroughly agree with him, and the recommendation of the Royal Commission, that the Education of the Blind should be made compulsory, and that all should be required to attend school, for I am afraid there are many, especially in country districts, who never attend at all. Judging from some of the pitiable cases of neglect in children of advanced age who are sent to us, showing an entire want of early training, I should say that most of us have experience of the desirability of this point. At Nottingham we have a number of blind children who come daily to the school of the Institution. Mr. Buckle mentioned a case of this kind this morning, which had not been a success. I refer to it again, in order to show how desirable it is, in my opinion, that education should be made compulsory. Although the education of these day pupils at the Nottingham Institution is entirely free, it is very difficult indeed to ensure regular attendance. Therefore, I believe the time has arrived when all blind children should be compelled to attend an efficient school. Then, with regard to the Bill which is about to be introduced into Parliament—I did not know anything of its provisions until last night, and probably they will be unknown to most of the Members present—I am exceedingly sorry, and surprised to find that there is no reference to technical training. The recommendations of the Royal Commission were, I thought, so very clear, that if the Government introduced a Bill at all, it would be necessary to include this vital portion. I am seriously afraid

that, unless we take some action in this matter, the latter state of things will be worse than the first. Under present circumstances the Guardians can and do help to maintain the blind, as a rule, until they have thoroughly learnt their trade; but if that is all to be swept away, what in the world are we going to do. as I fear we shall be in a much worse position than before? As I understand the Bill, the permissive powers hitherto exercised by Boards of Guardians are entirely repealed, except as to children who are deserted by their parents, or who are resident in a Workhouse, or whose parents are in receipt of Parochial relief, and in lieu of this the School Authority is to assume the responsibility. The peculiar part, however, of this Bill is that, whereas the Guardians could, if they chose, pay for a blind person's training of any age at an Institution, the powers of the School Authority entirely cease at sixteen years of age, in other words, no provision is made except through the School Authority, and that is for scholastic training only. Surely, now the Government are showing a disposition to deal with this question. the Bill should be watched carefully, and we should see to it, that the facilities which have hitherto existed, unsatisfactory as they were, for the Education and Training of the Blind should be increased, and not in any sense diminished. I beg to move this Resolution: "That this Conference, while rejoicing greatly that the State has recognised in the Bill for England and Wales. now before Parliament, that the Education of the Blind should be put on equal footing with that of the seeing, regrets deeply to find that there is no provision for technical training, and prays that the recommendations of the Royal Commission on this point also may be carried out."

MR. SIME seconded the Resolution, and drew a comparison between the English and Scotch Bills. He stated that by the latter, Technical Education was to be given up to sixteen years of age, but that was not sufficient, although a step in the right direction. He also considered the English Bill unsatisfactory.

MR. MARTIN: I came from Scotland by steamer, and on board that steamer was a blind man; as my custom is, I like to get acquainted with them, and to find out what they are about. He was a blind man, educated in the Glasgow Blind Institution up to 14 years of age; he underwent no Industrial training. He came to London, got employment as a missionary in connection with one of the London societies. He became ill, and had to give up that appointment, and in some way he got so far down as to be sent to St. Giles' Workhouse. He managed, however, to get a pension from the Day fund, and is at present in possession of that, but he wished to add to his income. He has a little daughter whom he was obliged to send to a Home where he has to pay 5s. per week. With tears running down his face he said that he

had to pay nearly all his next quarter's money away for his little girl, and "God knows," said he "how I can live for the rest of my time." I say that a man who becomes otherwise self-supporting, be he blind or sighted, should scorn to be in the receipt of a pension—to work is infinitely preferable. If I hide the fact that I can earn enough to support myself from the friends who may aid me, I am guilty of a fraud. Their inward sense of justice should make them refuse it. My Lord Bishop, I was present at the Conference which took place in 1870, Miss Gilbert and others were received by Lord de Gray and Mr. Forster, with reference to getting State aid for the blind. Mr. Forster expressed the opinion to me that he thought the Government would not be found willing to stop the outlets of public charity. Personally, I do not think this would be the result of State aid. If a man has money to leave behind him, to the help of such Institutions as ours, he can write his name on the roll of fame, like Day and Richardson Gardner. I think the motion before us confines itself to State aid towards instructing the blind until able to support themselves, and I maintain that if State aid is obtained, payment should be made by result. Government is very fond of seeing results for money spent, and I think it is right. The Bill we have for Scotland includes technical instruction until the age Moreover, your Lordship, this Bill is an educational one, and gives power to the Guardians to send children to school.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it will make matters a little clearer if I say that the effect of this Bill is to transfer the power from the Board of Guardians to the Educational Authorities. It is to take off the stigma of pauperism, and for that purpose the power to aid is transferred by clauses four and five to the Educational Authorities. Therefore you have not quite to fear that the power will cease; but it will be transferred to a higher and better authority.

Mr. Martin: The Bill before us is dealing with the question of education up to the age of 16. In Scotland, after a boy or girl has come to the age of 16 the Guardians are ready to step forward, and say, we will pay you at the rate of 8s. 6d. per week, in some cases, until his technical instruction is finished. It is that power that we wish to see transferred to a Parliamentary Bill, but that is a Bill in advance of this Bill. We wish the Government to do more than they propose doing. I mean, after the child has reached the age of 16.

The Resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

MR. PINE: As the Resolution has now been passed on the ground that whatever is done by Government, should, as a matter of course, include all Her Majesty's subjects, and should not be interpreted as referring only to the sighted, leaving the blind to

exceptional legislation, or none at all, I should like also to move this Resolution, which alludes to the subject in question—" That the Technical Education Acts of last Session should, by the introduction of all such modifications as may be necessary, be adapted to the case of the Blind of the United Kingdom."

The Chairman: Strictly speaking, the Board of Guardians can deal with the children of the blind over sixteen at present, but only as grown up paupers. They are not treated any longer as children. The Bill says nothing about them whatever. The Bill does not say anything at all, either one way or the other, about the power to deal with blind persons over sixteen.

Mr. Plater: I support, very strongly, the Resolution moved by Mr. Pine; but when I came to the meeting, I wondered what there was to discuss. I thought, really, that the duty of the Government to educate the children of the country was so clear, that a Government, which is prepared to assist Technical Education, could not refuse it to the blind. I ask for the blind man no more than the Government is prepared to give for the sighted in another direction, and I think that the most practical way of getting at it quick is this, that a deputation shall be appointed from this Conference to wait upon Viscount Cranbrook, who, I think, is the author of this Bill, to urge upon him the necessity of its improvement, or having an improved Bill tacked on to it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps we tire you a little, but it is necessary that those who are looking into this matter, should remember that the Bill deals with Elementary Education, nothing else, and it does not preclude the Government from dealing with the Technical Education of the Blind in another manner; the dealing of the Government with Technical Education has always been kept quite separate. Further, they are already dealing in a way with Technical Education, and it is rather our desire that they should tack on something to that Bill in the nature of a rider. All these official bodies like to run in grooves. If they move in grooves it is like going on a railway. For this reason they like to keep in their groove, and they move on in Elementary Education, and they will move as they have in past times; but as regards the Technical Education, they will prefer to deal with this matter later on. Therefore, while I think the Resolution a very good one, because we are not supposed to know of these official reasons, I think it better that you should take the Resolution as it stands, and not put on any rider.

MR. JOHN KEIR, of Aderdeen: This subject is one in which we, in Scotland, are very much interested, and I was very glad to hear Mr. Martin, referring, though in very inaccurate terms, to a

memorial we had sent to the Government from the Conference held in Edinburgh, at which I was present, and to which I have already referred. The proposition submitted by us was, that we should ask the Government to give State assistance to those unable to earn a livelihood, and thus relieve many from the stigma of pauperism, with which they are now branded. As regards the Bill which is now before Parliament, you are all aware that it has reference to children only. This is not sufficient. I hope that provision will yet be made for the Industrial Training of the Blind from sixteen to twenty-one; and, beyond that age, as long as the person is capable of being trained. Blind people do deserve some special assistance from the State, in virtue of their calamity. I consider that it is only a reasonable request, My Lord, that the State should in some way make up for the neglect of the blind in the past in respect of the want of a proper industrial training. In view of the fact that many of our number lose their sight after attaining advanced age, I think we have a right to expect the Government to give us assistance. When we asked it in our memorial, I do not think that the request was unreasonable. I am afraid that too often in the past we have had cause to complain of that assistance failing to reach us. I do not mean to say that it should be given indiscriminately. I should never imagine that for a moment. I have no doubt that the Government would take very good care that the applicant was eligible before giving the grant; and, that, even if it did not go through the hands of the Governor of an Institution, which is certainly not the best possible way, they would see to it that the deserving parties should really receive it without deduction.

DR. CAMPBELL: As a Member of the Royal Commission, I may say that there were four Blind Members on that Commission, and I do not think that the Members did, in the depth of their inmost souls, feel that the blind should receive direct compensation, nor should we, as blind persons, demand it to be done. I think it would injure the blind as a class. As a Member, I do not think that any such profession was ever made. We beg that they should have, and as the Lord Bishop remarked, let us ask for, something that we can get; and I am sure that was the intention of the Commission. It did not matter what the feelings of the Commission were on all other subjects. I know that we never dreamt of recommending Government to give pensions to the blind. What we did want, however, was that State Aid should be given to help the blind to be independent.

Mr. J. B. Meeson: It has been said that our Statesmen are very careful lest they should interfere with private charity in giving State aid. We do not ask them to do anything that would stay the flow of private benevolence, but only to supplement the

same. Private charity is too intermittent and locally circumscribed to deal with the demands which the Blind will ever make upon their more favoured sighted brethren. State aid is already given to the community at large to protect itself against the criminal classes; also for a class of people who will not or cannot work, the State provides a workhouse and parish relief. We ask the help of the State for those who will and can work, but who cannot, by reason of a grievous affliction, obtain employment without an organised agency like the institutions we represent. We claim that our work is of public interest, because to train children or to make men industrious workers instead of permitting them to grow up in idleness is to do the State a service, and should have its support. If colleges like the Yorkshire College at Leeds, where the sons of gentlemen are prepared for a scientific and commercial life, can have State help, then I think Institutions for the Blind, where children and adults are taught various branches of industry and so prepared to do something, if not all, towards their own future maintenance, should have the help of the stronger hand of the State and not be left to the ebb and flow of private charity. The difficulties are much greater in training the blind workers, which means the expense is also larger. Sighted children have the advantage of choosing their occupations according to taste or natural fitness. The blind child must make his choice. which is at the best a very limited one, according to the exigencies of the institution where he is being trained. This involves great expense, because he is longer in training and wastes more raw material than a sighted worker. In many cases a man becomes blind when he is a skilled artizan in some branch of trade which he cannot follow as a blind man. He has then to be taught another trade, which means he must spend a considerable time in training without wages and so has to appeal to the parish for relief, and endure the further trial of being a pauper. The advantage of State aid is very obvious in the direction that all blind workers would be equally benefited, which is far from the case at present. One town or district is better provided for than another. not because one part of the community is more deserving, but because the stream of private beneficence has flowed more freely, if not always more wisely.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is moved by Mr. Pine and seconded by Mr Sime "That this Conference, while rejoicing greatly that the State has recognised in the Bill for England and Wales, now before Parliament, that the education of the blind should be put on an equal footing with that of the seeing, regrets deeply to find that there is no provision for technical training, and prays that the recommendations of the Royal Commission on this point also may be carried out."

The Resolution was put to the meeting and carried.

MR. BUCKLE: I may be allowed a word of explanation on the Technical Education Bill, passed last Session. It provides that Corporations, or other local authorities may pay sums to local institutions for the purpose of providing Technical Education. The grants out of the local rates may not exceed more than one penny in the pound on the rateable value of the neighbourhood, and are made under conditions stated in the Bill. At York, for instance, the City Corporation are expending £ 300 this year under the provisions of this Bill.

DR. CAMPBELL: It seems to me that it should take just this form. We don't say what it is to be. I think the proposition is admirable.

The Chairman: I think that it is of very great importance to say this even if you use general language. This language is enough to indicate that the necessary modification should be introduced to deal with the special cases of the blind as distinct from those who can see. A general resolution of the blind would be quite enough to press upon the Government. What was suggested by Dr. Campbell is obviously a very natural modification. Any community, sending one for training to an institution, should be allowed to make a grant to that institution from their rates.

Mr. Keir: I think that the question is one of Local Rates or Imperial Exchequer, thus one place might treat their blind liberally, another less so.

The Chairman: I believe that we should get more money out of the Imperial than the Local Exchequer, but you will find it more difficult to get. There is more and more inclination to put burdens of this sort on local shoulders. You will have some places giving rather liberally, other places rather niggardly; but I suspect you would find then the remedy for that is to educate up the niggardly places. It was proposed that I, as Chairman, should send copies of these two Resolutions to Lord Cranbrook. I will do so.

It was moved by Mr. Munby and seconded by Mr. Harris: "That a Sub-Committee, with power to add to their number, be appointed to consider the Bill, introduced by Lord Cranbrook into the House of Lords, for the Elementary Education of the Blind and the Deaf."

This Resolution was carried, and Dr. Armitage, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Munby were appointed on the Committee.

Dr. Campbell: Dr. Ray, of Croydon, takes great interest in the blind, especially those persons becoming blind. He thinks it very important for this Conference to consider this subject; and, if it can be arranged, offers to read a paper. Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to move

a vote of thanks to his Lordship for taking the chair, and giving us his kind counsel and advice. He has advised us very wisely this afternoon, as he always did at the Meetings of the Royal Commission. He is doing valuable work for the blind as a Member of the Committee of the Gardner Trust, and the blind thoroughly appreciate his good services on their behalf.

Mr. Buckle: I have much pleasure in seconding the proposition.

The Motion was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

THE CHAIRMAN: I feel deeply interested in this question. The blind have a very considerable claim on our perpetual care, help, and sympathy. I am particularly glad to be present at the discussion of this question of State aid, as I think it is a duty to provide aid—and State aid—for the blind, and when it is said, as, in fact, Mr. Forster and Mr. Gladstone have said, that it was out of the question that the State should step in and interfere with the action of a private charity, it is obvious to answer that the same thing might be said with respect to Elementary Education. The blind certainly have excited the sympathy of benevolent people in the past, and a great deal has been done for them. Voluntary Charity may exert itself very much, but it would be likely to fall far short of the extreme need. I am glad to know that the general tendency of the discussion has been in favour of educating the blind, teaching and instructing them in special institutions for the purpose. I have given a good deal of thought to the matter, and what strikes me forcibly is this, it is profoundly true that if you want to do the blind good you must, as much as possible, put them in the position of the seeing. You must endeavour to make them independent of their defects. It is not, however, the best way to do this, to treat them as the already seeing. Now, for instance, I went about here with Dr. Campbell just now, and I have seen all the little contrivances by which the blind in this Institution are enabled to move about with perfect freedom. There is nothing particular to notice in a certain path, except that there is a door on the right hand side of a certain place, with a slight rise in the path, and the members of the Institution are taught to note this. Now, that is a kind of thing which naturally you might say is a very good thing while here; but they will not find slight risings in the paving outside, and if you led them to depend on these contrivances, you would do them harm. Nay, but what is said to these pupils is this, when you are in the world, try to fix on your memory little indications of the places you are going to; try to remember you are turning for a particular place that is near to a particular lamp-post; try to remember any particular thing which you meet. In all these ways you can prepare the blind to provide for themselves, by and by, that which has been provided for them here. This is what is done for them in this place, and which can be done for them both in this place and elsewhere. But those who do not come to such institutions, have had no previous indication of the enormous use that this plan would be to them. It would be a long time before they could turn their minds to little things of this sort. Some people would do it for themselves, but the comparison is just like a man learning arithmetic by himself, and learning it from a teacher. The difference is enormous. It can be done here, rapidly and surely; it can be done for the stupid as well as for the intelligent; it can be done for all who have average intelligence, and thus they can be put on a level with those who have much sharper and keener intellects. This is only one instance of a thing which can be done to a larger extent in many other ways. I have the pleasure of wishing you a good afternoon.

The Conference adjourned until the following morning.

After the adjournment tea was provided in the College Grounds, at the kind invitation of the Members of the Committee of the Royal Normal College.

At 7 p.m. Colonel Gouraud gave a most interesting Lecture

on the Phonograph in the College Hall.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23rd.

The Conference met at a quarter to eleven in the morning.

The Rev. Canon Fleming took the chair, and said—There is nothing more important than that our friends for whom we are here should be equipped in those especial gifts-shall I say?which appear to be powers that have been strengthened in them who have lost the gift of sight, to compensate for this loss (shall I say for a little time) for it shall be all received again in the world of light. But the gift of music is one of God's brightest and most special gifts to us. Our feeling in this country is growing stronger upon the question of individual self-help. I think that we wish every man to have work to do. We should like the richest as well as the poorest to have his avocation, and to find that he has work to do in life, and it should be our special avocation that we should help our friends less favoured than ourselves. Some are crippled in finding occupation, help them to find the work, and not only that, but help and teach them also how to do it. And I believe it is with that end that we are assembled here to-day. I shall not waste any time in further words, except in

expressing my happiness in being able to attend here this morning, at the invitation of Dr. Campbell.

Mr. H. J. Wilson then read the Report of the Sub-Committee, on—

TECHNICAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF THE BLIND AS A PREPARATION FOR EARNING A LIVELIHOOD.—MUSIC.

- I.—The innate requisites necessary to success in Music as a profession are—
 - I. Good musical talent.
 - 2. Good intellectual ability.
 - 3. Moral energy and force of character.

The aim of education is to develop, strengthen, and direct these powers into their proper channel. No amount of education can supply them, if lacking.

- II.—For the development of musical talent in the education of the blind. *Vocal Music* should receive a large share of attention in all Blind Schools, in devotional exercises, in social entertainments, musical drill, &c.. Listening to or taking part in concerts should also be regarded as essential.
- III.—The general education for the development of the intellectual ability should commence early in life, should be very theorough, and should not cease so long as the pupil is in the Institution. Some general studies should be pursued daily, decreasing as the time for leaving school approaches.
- IV.—With regard to the training and instruction in music (including organ and pianoforte) the following branches, as in the education of seeing musicians, should be studied.
- A.—1. Thorough grounding in the theory of music, which should include Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue, and Analysis of Form.
- 2. The constant practice of Scales, Arpeggi, and other technical exercises, calculated to ensure fluency of touch and cultivate independence and strength in the fingers; in addition to the careful practice of "studies," which teach variety of touch, expression, and style.
- 3. A practical study of the works of the standard composers of the classical school, and of such other music as may in the teacher's judgment prove useful to the student.

B .- For the Blind specially.

1. A complete knowledge of the ordinary notation and

characters used in music as for the seeing, together with a thorough acquaintance with the reading and writing of music in the Braille type.

- 2. Constant watchfulness on the part of the teacher as to position of the pupil's hands, and as much as possible to discourage that groping for the keys so often noticeable in blind performers.
- 3. Cultivation of the faculty of recognizing chords, and progression of chords, by hearing, an acquirement of immense value to the blind musician.

For obvious reasons the playing and singing of the blind should never be left entirely to blind instructors. Such a course of training presupposes such talent and ability as is mentioned in division I. There are doubtless many blind, more weakly endowed as regards music, who yet will be able to take second or third rate places. Tuning will often be found quite within the reach of their powers, and in this they should be trained.

V.—Care should be taken when a pupil trained in music leaves the Blind Institution that he is located where he will find something to do—either as organist, or teacher, or tuner. If his own friends and relations are not able to exercise some superintending care, the interest of some influential persons in the neighbourhood should, if possible, be enlisted on his behalf.

DR. Armitage: I have listened with great interest to the Report just read, and I should think no one here will dissent from it, but, probably, to avoid differences of opinion, it is altogether silent on one of the most important questions relating to the training of the blind as professional musicians. Standing here in the Royal Normal College, I would rather not have introduced a question on which there are great differences of opinion, but I venture to do so, as I trust we are all met here to promote the welfare of the blind, and not the interests of this or that institu-The point on which I invite discussion is this—Is it desirable for every school for the blind to attempt to train pupils with a view of their maintaining themselves by the profession of music? This is quite a different thing from giving a certain amount of instruction in vocal and instrumental music, which is done in every School for the Blind, and rightly so, if it is merely intended that music is to be an amusement and a means of raising the character of those whose serious work in life is to be handicraft trades, but I am speaking now of the training of professional musicians. If this is the object, it is not of the slightest use to teach the pupils to play a few airs moderately well. The blind must receive as thorough a training as seeing musicians obtain in the best conservatoires, otherwise they will not be equal as musicians to the seeing, and they ought to be superior, as there is still a doubt in the minds of many whether the blind can really be as good

teachers, choir masters, &c., as the seeing. I well remember that some twenty or five-and-twenty years ago it was very common to state in an advertisement for an organist, "No blind person need apply," and it was quite natural for the advertisers to make this restriction, as, in those days, the musical education given in our institutions for the blind was, as a rule, very defective, and even now the opinion prevails with the managers of many of our institutions, that music is a precarious means of livelihood for the blind. This is not our experience at the Royal Normal College. We can, as a rule, find good situations for all those who have obtained their certificates as organists, and the certificated tuners can generally make a very good living. This is also the experience of the Paris National Institution. But to attain this end great knowledge of the subject and power of selecting the right teachers, and enthusiastic devotion to their pupils are necessary in the managers; and even these qualities are not sufficient without large funds. Good musical instruments are expensive, and bad ones will not answer the purpose. In this College we have, I believe, about ninety pianos and four pipe organs, besides harmoniums and pedal pianos; and all these instruments are kept going the whole day. Then, there is the teaching staff, consisting partly of resident and partly of non-resident teachers. The greatest care is required to select and retain none but those who are thoroughly competent and willing to throw all their energies into their work. The enumeration of the non-resident professors is sufficient to show that the very best teaching power to be obtained in London is employed. Dr. Hopkins, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Banister, and the two Hartvigsons are familiar names to the musical world. Such men are fully employed in private and public teaching, and they cannot devote their time to the education of the blind without receiving sufficient remuneration. The resident teachers in all departments are numerous, and also the best that can be obtained. Anything short of excellence in the pupils who leave means failure, so that a large, first-rate, and therefore expensive teaching staff is absolutely necessary. Another essential in a musical school is to have a sufficient number of pupils, so that they can be divided into classes. It is also absolutely necessary that it should be near a great musical centre where the pupils can have the opportunity of hearing the best music rendered by the best performers. I have now given in outline some of the conditions without which I consider that a good average of success will not be obtained by the pupils who leave the school as musicians. If a school possesses these requisites, most of its musical pupils will succeed; if it does not possess them it cannot be a matter of surprise if the average of success is low.

Mr. Buckle: I rise mainly on this occasion, not because I have anything to object to in the Report of the Sub-Committee,

but only to object to our good friend Dr. Armitage's historical reference in regard to the advertisement for an organist, which stated "No blind person need apply." I think I am right in stating, what is known to be a fact, that there are persons of influence in the country who may have places to dispose of at the present time who would, if they durst, say, "No blind organist need apply." They would do it, not because they think blind organists insufficiently educated, but they think it is more trouble to have a blind organist than a seeing one. I speak from experience and say that there are persons who if you apply on behalf of the blind will not go into the question at all. I was sorry to hear Dr. Armitage say, in reference to this advertisement, that he thought they were right in appending such a note, because, as I understood him to say, the blind were so badly trained in music. Now on behalf of our Yorkshire School I must protest against this view. York has trained blind organists for more than half a century, by no means indifferent organists, but such as could hold their own against seeing ones. To mention an instance I may say that twenty-five years ago an organist was needed for Selby Abbey Church. There were several competitors for the post, amongst whom was one former pupil of the York School. Dr. Monk, the organist of York Minster, was the judge, and without being aware of the fact of his blindness, he chose the blind organist. I could mention several former pupils of the Yorkshire School, who, at the time Dr. Armitage says they used to advertise that "No blind need apply," were doing well as blind organists. One other point I must refer to, that is, whether the musical pupils should be trained in local institutions or all in one large central college or academy. Well all I have to say, as coming from a local provincial institution is this, that we cannot afford to part with our musical pupils and give up our musical training. We are still largely dependent on donations and subscriptions, and we find that the musical work of our schools adds considerably to the interest taken in it by the general public, whose aid we still need. A central institution has its worth, and here let me express my admiration at the excellent manner in which the Psalms have been chanted at the opening of each day's Conference—it seemed to me perfection of chanting. But while so much can be done here, some of the smaller provincial institutions are doing work of which they need not be ashamed.

MR. HALL, of Swansea: It was not my intention to have spoken to day, but from some remarks of Dr. Armitage's, I shall say a few words in regard to tuning and repairing. I quite agree as to the difficulty of training the blind at small institutions, such as Swansea, where the number of pupils is only about twenty, of whom, perhaps, not more than three or four are specially

adapted to be trained as musicians, and who would, thereby, earn their livelihood; therefore, you can see, it would be impossible for us to provide a teacher for such a small number, so as to enable them to become qualified, and gain their livelihood as tuners and repairers. I quite understand that in institutions where there are 50 to 100 pupils, they can employ teachers to impart technical knowledge, and bring pupils to perfection as tuners, repairers, and organists; but this certainly cannot be done at the small institutions. See the great utility of a college like this, where we might draft off those who are likely to prove efficient, were we unable to teach them ourselves.

MR. Illingworth: While concurring in main with the paper which was read on this subject, I would like to draw your attention to one small, yet important point, which appears to have been omitted. I think that a blind musician, however well trained as such—he might be a Doctor of music—and still unable to become a successful choir master, partly owing, perhaps entirely owing, to his affliction. I think that the education of a blind musician for such a post should include training in the method of discipline in teaching a choir, and in enforcing discipline. I know that one of the greatest objections urged against blind organists is that they cannot maintain order. On one occasion I remember a blind young man applying for the post of organist, and the only objection was that "he would not be able to control the boys." If the blind are to become successful choir masters and organists, they should have an opportunity, as they have with us, of taking charge of a choir, and of keeping discipline. My plan is to give students for this profession—organist and choir master—a little teaching of an ordinary English class along with their musical education, in order that they may get practice, not only in the art of imparting knowledge, but also in governing, especially boys, as in most of the large Churches the choirs consist, to a great extent, of boys. Now, I am rather sorry that Dr. Armitage discourages small institutions from attempting to bring out the latent talent, which lies dormant in the breasts of those who may some day become eminent musicians. If the smaller institutions are not well equipped with apparatus, they cannot, of course, do so. there are a number of other institutions besides the Royal Normal College, well equipped, and if in these schools such talent be discovered, it is the duty of these schools to develop it; if the talent be not there, no school can do so. Supposing that we. here in Conference, voted, and it was taken as a hard and fast rule, that other institutions than Norwood should not attempt to educate the blind as musicians, there would be many who would never rise, simply because they happened to be in an institution where no apparatus was provided for the develop-

ment of their talent. I think all institutions should be provided with the apparatus necessary for bringing out musical abilities. Every child who is blind does not happen to fall in with a large school like this one, or the one at Paris, or Edinburgh. Then, I say that all institutions should possess a school where music is taught, including piano, and organ, and violin, and blind music masters should be employed, if possible. There are many such, very capable. We have one in Edinburgh, who can compete with any one in the country, he is very old and very clever. Therefore, let every institution that has a school provide teachers of music, and undertake the education of the blind as professional musicians. I beg to move the following Resolution:—"That this Conference, after discussion, approves of the Report of the Sub-Committee, and thanks them for their labour; but thinks it advisable to add, that in all Institutions for the Blind where there is a school, due attention should be paid to training probable organists in maintaining thorough discipline amongst pupils."

Dr. Campbell said: I do not approve of the paper or the Resolution as it stands. I think that you ought not to vote upon it before the matter is discussed more thoroughly.

Mr. Coy, of Leicester, seconded the Resolution, and after referring to the singing of the pupils of the College, asked whether it would not be possible to get some of them engagements as singers in our Cathedrals, Churches, and Chapels as well as at concerts.

THE CHAIRMAN: After what has just been said, I am sure it will interest you to know that one trained in this College is a tenor in my choir, and is about to be married also. His banns were published on Sunday last.

CANON NELIGAN: It is well for each delegate here—no matter how limited his sphere of work may be-to give you the benefit of his experience. The Society with which I am connected in Dublin is limited to 50 blind females, yet some good work has been done there. One of the inmates has always been either organist or assistant organist in our own Church. My present assistant was trained from early childhood amongst us, and does her work very well. Some others are in country Churches, and we have some who can go out on a Sunday whenever required. There are hindrances to great success in this line. One is permanent separation of the organist from the Institution on which she has hitherto gratefully depended. To meet this we consider that the person who nobly goes out to earn her bread ought to have the place kept secure for her in the Institution, so that if through illness or some blameless cause she lost her office, she could at once return and claim the shelter and protection of the

institution; and also return to it in the vacation for the purpose of getting lessons in music and keeping up her knowledge and her friendships. Secondly, many clergymen object to blind organists, inasmuch as they cannot act as choir masters or choir mistresses. This objection is fair and sensible, but it can be met by the clergyman engaging a parochial schoolmaster or mistress or some musical friend to act as choir-master, and thus leave the instrumentalist to the organ. In the best and largest churches this is done, and with advantage to all parties. A blind person cannot watch the faces and demeanour of the youthful members of a choir, and you cannot expect impossibilities. Divide the office into two and you will solve this second and serious difficulty.

Mr. W. Harris, of Leicester: I have to address the meeting again, and I must ask my hearers to remember that I have not heard what has been said. The subject of teaching music to the blind need not occupy much of my time, for it is well known that it is done well here, and in other schools for the blind in the Kingdom. The blind are fond of music and readily learn it. I should think there would be no difficulty in finding competent teachers anywhere. I desire to speak with all tenderness in the presence of the blind, but I must say in their presence what I would say behind their backs. The first point I would touch upon is, that music is injurious to the health of the blind. who are none of them too strong. It requires continued and close attention and practice, especially in learning new music. This close application also takes place indoors and is very trying. The next point is, that the work is irregular and the pay is irregular; it is not like an occupation where the work and pay are regular, and most blind people are not very rich. They need to have something constantly coming in. Another point is the late hours, which very often follow. Also hot rooms, and being from home at the time when most people are best and happiest there. It has sometimes led to intemperance; we have had an illustration of this in Leicester. The Royal Commission did not recommend music as a profession for ordinary blind persons, and at the time that the Gardner Trust for the Blind was being settled by the Court of Chancery, much evidence was collected on the subject by the Charity Organization Society, and the evidence was very much against too much music. I reluctantly give my views on the subject, for I know music is an occupation which the blind think a good and remunerative one, but I feel that a word of warning is needed. I think one reason why the blind like the profession of music is that it brings more pay and pleasure than handicrafts.

Mr. Martin, Edinburgh: I sometimes take a cold bath in the morning, but I must say I felt cold shivers down my back at the remarks of our friend Dr. Armitage. I should like to have heard him talking in a less cruel tone about small Institutions. I think the remarks of Dr. Armitage would discourage all Institutions in pressing forward in this important branch. Talking for a Royal Blind Asylum School in Edinburgh, we have been able to turn out very many who have done well as organists, pianotuners, &c., and I should not like to be discouraged in going forward in this special branch. I should like to draw the attention of the meeting to one or two special points In order to secure blind children at as early an age as possible, we have to educate the mothers that their children will be as tenderly and lovingly cared for in an Institution, and much more judiciously educated than at home. We should then be able better to note any musical talent and increase it. Mr. Chairman, I had the pleasure of paying a visit to the Gymnasium of this Institution, where I was charmed by the methods of physical instruction which would be invaluable to a musician. You may give a boy a training, but you must make him go through with the thing. In making him a piano-tuner you must also educate his manners. Then a higher education is most important. You want to educate him to talk respectfully, wisely, and appropriately to those he shall come in contact with for piano-tuning. Send a boor into a lady's house and she will not like it, but send a blind gentleman, well educated, into a house, and the lady has some confidence in him. One lad who can talk on almost any subject is attached to our Institution as a piano-tuner, and he has his £78 per year from us. Then again you must teach them self-respect. I am quite aware of the breakers ahead. If you do not attend to this, they will find their way to the public-house. The lad to whom I refer, was asked to go to an evening dancing party. "Oh," said he, "I wont go, I should lose my self-respect," not that going to a dancing party was anything immoral, but he knew drink was going. I think Dr. Campbell was very wise in reducing the result of his work to pounds, shillings and pence. There is nothing better. Dr. Campbell tells us that the ex-pupils earn £,10,000 a year. We cannot say that, but we can say that persons who have been trained in our place are doing well. One of our ex-pupils can earn £250 a year. We all need more money. We are pleased to see the apparatus arranged here; don't let us be discouraged in our little Institutions. Let us fight our way, training the blind to become musicians, and drag in our rich friends to give us the instruments we need, so that we may have more satisfactory results. There is no reason why we should not produce good results. Let us all try and find a Dr. Armitage to help us.

Mr. Moldenhawer, of Copenhagen: It is not a question whether small institutions can educate blind people in music, but rather whether they can be expected to see, at an early age, if a boy or a girl is likely to become a musician. It is better to ascertain whether the children have musical talent, before they

are placed in large institutions like the Normal College. The wish for learning and the talent will work together. Afterwards occasion may arise for getting promising pupils into a special establishment.

The Chairman being compelled to leave, the chair was taken by Canon Neligan.

DR. ARMITAGE: When I first spoke I saw that the discussion was breaking away and had no substance; and I said to my friend, Mr. Wilson, I think I shall get up and throw a ball into the Conference to wake them up a little, and I think that you will allow that my football has been kicked pretty well. I hope that we have not finished with it yet. Still I may say frankly, that I have no wish whatever to stop small institutions from working at music. I would add, that I think every Institution for the Blind should teach music, but I suggest that the teaching of music in small institutions, which have a small number of pupils, and have not the funds nor the expensive apparatus for teaching music thoroughly, should be confined to elementary music. they teach should be good, with a thorough grounding in elementary music. That does not cost much, and I think that in every country it is well to have a Conservatoire of music for the blind, for which the pupil should have been trained in smaller schools, from which they might gravitate to this common centre. I know there is a great difficulty here. Their musical exhibitions are the best advertisements for the school, and as long as we have no State Aid it is necessary for all schools to keep themselves well before the public in order to get this advertisement. I feel, therefore, very tenderly for the small schools in regard to their music, but let us consider two things. The school must obtain support, and therefore it is very difficult to give up training musicians, but on the other hand, I feel quite confident that, as a rule, thoroughly good professional musicians cannot be trained in small schools, no matter whether for the blind or the seeing. For training thoroughly high class musicians you must send them to a good Conservatoire of Music. We may have, and we have, isolated cases of blind musicians leaving small schools, who, by their energy and musical talent, are able to make their way in spite of their not having received the best possible musical education, but the average blind person, boy or girl, must, if he or she is to succeed, be thoroughly taught in the very best possible manner known in the present day. Therefore in considering this subject we must start two questions: (1) "Whether a certain amount of musical exhibition is necessary for the success of the school," and (2) "What is the best form of training?" In the first place, let every institution give elementary musical training of the very best character, and get competent teachers for that purpose. There are plenty of blind people to be had now who can train

the blind thoroughly in elementary classes; let the pupils on leaving be sent, I do not say here, but to any school where there is a sufficient musical staff for them to be thoroughly trained, and when trained, let them return to the town which has sent them out, and you will have musicians, blind musicians, who came from your own school, but who have had the advantage of possessing a Certificate of Music, just as the seeing ones do. They return to you, and you will be able to give organ recitals and concerts which will delight the public very much better even than those that you could give with your own pupils without any such extra training. I just throw that out as a possible solution for this very difficult problem. With regard to Mr Harris's notes, every blind musician knows that music is the very best profession that a blind person can follow.

Dr. Campbell: With very few exceptions, the Institutions for the Blind throughout the world, teach music as a solace to the blind, rather than as a profession, by which they are to make a living. If we merely wish the blind to play or sing for the pleasure of themselves and friends, the difficulties vanish, and the object can be obtained without great expense. On the other hand, if the blind are to compete with their seeing brethen in the profession of music, and if we expect the world to recognise them as able and accomplished musicians, we should not waste our strength crying out that the world is prejudiced against the blind; but put forth every possible effort to remove the just causes which have led to the present state of things. I have already stated, that in many institutions the blind learn to play and sing for their pleasure and amusement; yet, when they go into the world, if clergymen hesitate to employ them as organists and choir masters, we hear that they are prejudiced against the blind. If the blind—male and female—are to succeed in the profession of music, we must first make them very intelligent men and women, even superior in character and general ability to those of the same profession among the seeing. If we add to manly character and general ability, very special high-class musical training, we may then reasonably expect to obtain success. If we are to have good music teaching, we must pay for it. Good musical instruction for the seeing is very expensive. We cannot expect to give similar instruction to the blind with less cost. As a basis or fundamental condition, proper physical education and training is indispensable; true physical development is the lever which sets all the other forces in motion. A good musical notation is as indispensable to the blind as to the seeing; it should be taught at the outset, from the very first the blind child ought to learn his music through the musical notation, otherwise it will become only an accomplishment. He will delight his friends by reading a few bars of music, they will declare it to be wonderful; but when he is left to himself, the embossed music will be put on the shelf, and he will depend on some seeing friend to read the music to him. experience as a student, teacher, director, and lastly, as a seeker of employment for large numbers of the blind, compels me to say that you may combine the best system of physical development, the highest moral and intellectual training with instruction from the ablest musical professors based upon a good musical notation, and yet achieve only a moderate degree of success. The blind. as a class, are not over-industrious, nine-tenths of those who claim to possess musical talent would rather play this or that pretty tune, than undergo all the drudgery that is necessary to enable one to rise in the musical profession. We must lay out the work on a very methodical plan, and then see that the pupils do it in a thorough business-like manner. As the Principal of the College, I make it my business to know what every girl and boy in the school is learning, their exercises, scales, and studies, as well as their pieces. We frequently have recitals, and the pupils understand that they must be prepared to play anything they have been learning during the whole term. Sometimes I hear them alone, sometimes with the professors, and again before the whole school. But even this would not keep the work up to high-water mark, if the daily practice of the pupils was not under supervision; without good practice it is impossible to have good lessons, consequently much will depend on the character of the monitors who have charge of the practice. As a child, I was wrongly taught, and when I went into the world to make my own living, I discovered that I had no practical knowledge of teaching. I well remember my first lesson. I was engaged to give pianoforte lessons to two sisters. I had been taught to play so that my performances were an attraction in the institution where I was educated, and yet when the practical test was applied, my musical education proved worthless. As I drew near the house where I was to give the lessons, I began to ask myself how, or what, I should teach the young ladies, and for the first time I realised that my musical education was dust and ashes. I had nothing whatever that was practical. I heard the young ladies play, and in order to gain time, I told them I had now carefully tested their present knowledge, and we would begin our regular lessons next week. Fortunately we had a very able teacher in the city, and before I went home I called upon him and with some difficulty arranged with him for lessons. My first lesson with him began about 7 p.m., and lasted until 11 p.m. I rose from that pianoforte stool a missionary to my class. From that hour to the present time, it has been my special mission to see that the blind shall have an education as complete, comprehensive, and practical as their seeing brethren, with whom they must compete in the world's market. In regard

to the question whether music should be taught in the small as well as the large institutions, I must strongly urge that the question is not whether the institution is large or small, but what is the character of the teaching provided. Let any institution, however small, give musical instruction, providing the teaching is thoroughly good, however elementary it may be.

MR. COLIN MACDONALD, of Dundee: I am very glad indeed that Dr. Armitage has made a second speech, as it has cleared up the misconceptions to which his first gave rise. We seem to be agreed that the study of music should be begun in small institutions, but there is a difference of opinion as to where the education should be completed. The Royal Normal College seems admirably adapted for conducting the higher education of the blind, but the fee required (f,60 per annum) restricts this training to the favoured few. If the rate could be reduced, say to about one half. I feel sure that many blind persons of talent. who have at present to be content with the very inferior training they and their friends can afford to pay for, would find their way to a college such as this. Elementary music is being taught in our institution in Dundee by a blind man, a graduate of this college, but when we discover a pupil of exceptional musical ability we send him to Dr. Campbell, that his gift may be developed. Several of our pupils have been trained under Dr. Campbell and we are highly satisfied with the results that have been attained. Fortunately our institution has a fund that yields f 60 a year to be applied for the special purpose of giving a thorough musical training, else these cases I fear would never have been properly dealt with. The Edinburgh Blind Asylum professes to give a musical education equal to that of the College for f,20 per annum, and if this be so surely the Norwood rate is too high. My object in rising at this time is simply to express the hope that the rates for a finished musical training in our colleges may be so modified that every blind person who possesses musical talent may have an opportunity of perfecting it.

The Resolution, proposed by Mr. Illingworth and seconded by Mr. Coy, was put from the chair and carried unanimously.

After the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman the meeting adjourned until the afternoon.

JULY 23rd.

Afternoon Meeting at Grosvenor House.

THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER took the chair, and said: Ladies and Gentlemen, I have very little qualification or pretence to be Chairman, but can say this, that I have for some years been connected with the College at Norwood. I am able to speak as to what the enthusiasm and genius of Dr. Campbell have effected there. We have no greater friend to the blind, nor a more qualified person as regards knowledge of the subject on the Continent of Europe or America than Dr. Armitage. I myself have been able to see how much has been effected with regard to training -especially in regard to music-the blind who have had no other opportunities, and how they have in many cases obtained large incomes and are leading useful and prosperous lives. have been able to see that an important branch of the establishlishment is carried out, that is the training of teachers, to teach the blind all over the country. This is a branch which the College is prosecuting with a considerable amount of success, and I am glad to say that we have also been able to turn out organists, tuners of pianos, and teachers of music. Professor Campbell has been the founder with Dr. Armitage of this Institution. can say this, that in the times that are coming Dr. Armitage and Dr Campbell will have earned a name in the cause of the education of the blind. I am very glad to invite you to rest a little after your labours. I will not detain you as there is some business to be carried through, but I hope you will all pass a very enjoyable afternoon.

Mr. Pine: The subject that I have the honour to bring before you this afternoon is the report of the Sub-Committee on "Handicrafts for the Blind." The Report I am about to read to you is a series of recommendations which have been drawn up by myself as Secretary to this Sub-Committee, and which have been approved by my colleagues—Mr. Macdonald, of Dundee; Mr. Martin, of Edinburgh; and Mr. McCormick of Manchester; the latter of whom I much regret is not able to be with us at this Conference. I do not, therefore, imagine that the subject is one that will cause very much controversy or discussion, as I think it will be one on which we shall find ourselves pretty well agreed. I take it rather that the object the Committee had in view in appointing these Sub-Committees was that they should draw up a series of recommendations bearing upon the various subjects, and that each Sub-Committee should present the result of its deliberations in the form of a Report to this Conference. If the Report commends itself to the Conference and is adopted by them it would then lay down a sort of standard or basis of action

for each Institution to follow as being the best method of dealing with or working out any particular department or subject. This would then have the effect of promoting more uniformity in Institutions and improving and encouraging those whose methods may be somewhat defective, and so assisting them as far as possible to shape their work upon what had been agreed as the best lines rather than their working within themselves on methods, perhaps, somewhat opposed to others.

MR. PINE read the Report of the Sub-Committee, as follows:

TECHNICAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF THE BLIND AS A PREPARATION FOR EARNING A LIVELIHOOD.—HANDICRAFTS.

I.—The preparatory training in the use of the hand.

II.—The Handicrafts suitable to be pursued by the blind.

- (1). When working at their own homes.
- (2). When working in special workshops for the blind.

III.—The training of Adults.

- I.—The preparatory training in the use of the hand should include—
- (1) All exercises tending to physical development, such as gymnastics, calisthenics, drill, swimming (if practicable), organised games, recreation, &c.
- (2) Exercises tending to the acquisition of a knowledge of size, shape, form, &c. In this connection suitable Kindergarten training and modelling should be carried on as a stepping stone to technical training, there being a very close relationship existing between Kindergarten and the objective principle, which should underlie all training of the blind.

During scholastic training many lessons might be given by the teachers on the handicrafts usually taught at Institutions with a view of the pupils acquiring a theoretical knowledge of the trades they were engaged, or were likely to engage in after leaving school.

II.—The handicrafts suitable to be pursued by the blind.

These departments should be carried on under well skilled supervision, not more than one handicraft, as a rule, being taught to each individual, and that every facility be given in the employment of blind teachers.

The training in Handicrafts should after 14 be carried on concurrently with intellectual teaching, and should not terminate before 20 years of age at the earliest.

 When working at their own homes. This branch will include basket-making, chair-reseating, probably brush-drawing in an opportunity exists of taking the work into some workshop or factory.

In a selection of Handicrafts for practising at home, the particular requirements of the neighbourhood should be carefully studied. Care must also be exercised as to the suitability of the neighbourhood for the purpose, and the assistance which could be relied on or would be extended to the pupil, either from the Institution or from influential people in the neighbourhood. Consideration should also be given to the ability, force of character, self-reliance, &c., of the pupil, and the probability of his being able to act for himself. Obviously, in addition to relying on his own manufactures, trading in any articles connected with his business should be encouraged.

Probably type-writing is an employment which might be practised by the blind.

Pianoforte-tuning also opens a fair career for those who have the capacity for it, and are well trained.

Chair reseating being alight occupation, and knitting, crocheting, and wool work are well suited for females at home. It is not advisable as a means of profit that females should be taught basket-making.

(2) When working in special workshops for the blind, mattress and bedding making is one of the most remunerative handicrafts, and has the advantage of employing both males and females. It is not unhealthy and can be undertaken without a large amount of sighted assistance.

Brush-making is a most suitable occupation and can employ a large number of blind people in its various operations.

Mat and cocoa matting making is also worthy of consideration, and excellent work can be done by the blind.

Also weaving of various kinds, rope-making, and, in some districts the manufacture of ship fenders are successful.

Firewood chopping and bundling is also recommended, and is especially suitable for the old blind.

III.—The training of Adults.

It is desirable that all adult blind persons should at least beafforded training in some handicraft, and there should be some means of ensuring that blind persons under technical training remain until they are efficient in their trade.

Where the means at command of an adult blind person are insufficient, his expenses during training should be provided at the public cost, and this should be by a separate authority than the Board of Guardians, instead of its being at their option, as at present. Otherwise, where Boards of Guardians grant money for maintenance in or outdoors at some Institution for special training in Handicrafts, it should not be looked upon as out-relief and the recipient should not be pauperised, or be subject to the stereotyped regulations framed for sighted persons who receive out-relief without service.

Mr. Pine: Permit me to say a few words on one point mentioned in the paper. I mean in regard to type-writing. We are all of us most anxious at this Conference to ascertain whether it is not possible to introduce some new handicraft or employment for the benefit of the blind, and it has struck me for some time past that something might probably be done with regard to this invention. I cannot say I have much experience myself of this, and from enquiries I have made I find that very little is done in this country in regard to Institutions for the Blind; but, yet, a good deal has been, and is being done in America. I mentioned this idea in a preliminary paper I submitted to the Members of this Sub-Committee, and it was felt by Mr. McCormick that it would be impracticable for the blind, on the ground that the operator would need a sighted person to overlook the work, and that, therefore, two persons would be necessary to satisfactorily do the work of one. I submitted this objection to a friend of mine who has some experience in the matter, and he writes me as follows:

> 18, Warwick Street. Rugby.

DEAR MR. PINE,

I enclose an advertisement. The question has been forcibly impressed upon me by the fact that my brother, who is almost blind, is now able to write with ease with the typewriter, and finds great interest and amusement therefrom, and has lately published a book which he typed for the printer. I do not think that the practical difficulties in the way of working the machine are likely to prove insuperable to a blind person who can be taught to work one of your mat-making machines. Of course this must be tested by trial; but if the blind can be taught to play the piano correctly, without a false note now and then, they can surely be taught to type without mistakes. Trifling mistakes are of little consequence in this case, for in handwriting mistakes are scarcely noticed, but no doubt serious errors would have to be corrected by a person with sight.

But even if it appeared on trial that the blind could not earn so much as four shillings an hour by typing from dictation, the power of writing their own letters would certainly be a great boon.

I shall be glad to answer any more questions, and I should like to hear how the idea is received at your Conference by those who have had practical experience in the instruction of the blind.

July 6, 1890.

W. M. MOORSON.

I also made inquiries of our local agents for the Remington Type-writing Company, at Nottingham, and they kindly furnished me with the book issued by the Remington Company, in which they state that the blind can use the typewriter, and that several Institutions for the Blind have purchased them, so that their inmates might have the benefit of learning to use them. This book I afterwards found was published in America, however; and these remarks, therefore, allude to that country. The agents at Nottingham were good enough to write to Messrs. Wyckoff, Seamans and Benedict, of the Remington Company, on this question; and I give you their reply, as follows:

MESSRS. LEWIS AND GRUNDY.

Nottingham.

July 19th, 1890.

Gentlemen,

We have your favour of the 18th inst. in regard to the introduction of the typewriter into Institutions for the Blind. Unfortunately the machine is not used to any great extent by the Schools for the Blind in this country, but is used quite largely by private individuals. We think if you would write to the Rev. Robert Kane, Milltownpark, Milltown, Dublin, he would be glad to state his experience in the use of the machine.

The writer, however, has had a large experience in America with Blind Institutions where they almost without exception, teach it. It has been found to be well adapted to the uses of the blind, and enables them to put their thoughts on paper with great freedom. In fact, they learn to use the machine quite as quickly as seeing persons.

For the purposes of mere instruction, we think, possibly, our No. 4 machine would be quite as well suited to blind persons, and, perhaps, better suited than the capital and small letter machines. We trust you will be successful in introducing the machine in the Nottingham Institute.

Yours very truly,

WYCKOFF, SEAMANS & BENEDICT.

This seems to establish the fact that it can be successfully taught and practised, and it seems to me that it also has this advantage, that the pay would be very much better than for some occupations in which our blind are engaged. I notice that type-writing from dictation is quoted at 2s. 6d. to 3s. per hour, or 1½d. per folio of seventy-two words. This would apparently leave a fair margin for the operator, and if we could by really careful teaching make our pupils efficient, there might possibly be work for some of them in this direction at a fair rate of pay. I don't think I need detain you further; but I particularly wished to bring this subject forward this afternoon, for if it were felt by this Conference that it was a desirable thing to introduce, it would be necessary for our institutions to teach it.

DR. CAMPBELL: I would like to ask before moving the adoption of this Report, whether the Secretary would kindly change the form of one sentence. I do not like workshops being termed "blind workshops." I know it is only formal, but I protest against it.

This alteration was agreed to, and Dr. Campbell, after mentioning that he could write rapidly with most of the typewriting machines, moved that the Report be adopted.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will some lady or gentlemen kindly second the motion for the adoption of the Report.

Mr. R. Tarr seconded the motion, and stated that he had listened with great pleasure to the paper, and was gratified to hear the practical way in which the question had been dealt with. He said that in his work among the blind in London he had found that some who had been at school were scarcely better off than those who had received no instruction, because there was no market for their work.

Mr. Moldenhawer, of Copenhagen: It has been said that the blind undertook shoe making with good results on the continent, and I can say this, that in Denmark we have adopted shoe making as a trade, and with very good results, indeed, just as good as by any other profession. But I should say that it is not possible to reach this point of success without special tools for the blind. The tools, which are on view in the Exhibition were invented by the master and pupils at the Copenhagen Institution; and, thus, by these means the blind workman is as well off as the seeing one. It is only a question of having sufficient work to do. I think if the shoe maker is not in a place where he is quite sure that he can gain his livelihood, it will be a very good thing if he has learnt some other trade. It oftens happens that the blind learn two professions. I differ with the remark in the Report that we ought to teach the blind only one trade. I am of opinion that it is frequently essential for him to have two. I have had cases brought to my notice where a blind person has learned only one handicraft. and finding that he could gain more money in another way, he has changed his trade. These remarks are the result of my experience. The blind ought to thoroughly learn one profession, but if time permit, and he is clever, he should learn two.

Mr. Carter, of Sheffield: I rise to move the following amendment. "That so much of the Report as recommends that not more than one handicraft be taught to each individual be not approved." The teaching of a blind man only one handicraft is the way to cripple him. We find that some of these very handicrafts mentioned by Mr. Pine in his paper, have been learnt after a very short apprenticeship. We made an attempt at Sheffield to introduce shoe making, but it did not succeed; but I am afraid it was owing to inefficient teaching. One of our adult working men, who had a brother-in-law engaged in shoemaking, thought that, if our boys could do shoe making, he might be able to do the work with his brother-in-law's teaching.

He went to him, and in a very short time was able to do that kind of work. This man at the present moment is living with his parents at a farm a few miles from Sheffield, and is carrying on several branches of business, whereas one only would be insufficient to support him. He makes and repairs boots and shoes; weaving also brings him in a little when he is not able to find occupation in boot and shoe making, sufficient to support him. Then, also, he is able to clean clocks. This is a thing which not many blind men can do. So I say, that to confine our instructions in our workshops to one handicraft is a mistake. Take chair caning—it is easily taught and soon learnt, and although a man cannot live by it alone, he is able to gain a supplementary amount of emolument by it. By these means he is able to earn a livelihood. I think, for this reason, it is a mistake not to teach more than one handicraft.

Mr. Moldenhawer seconded Mr. Carter's Amendment, and said that it might be of interest to mention that in America three of his former pupils live very well by shoe making. One of them met with a blind girl, and they were married. They lived very comfortably, and their house is quite a model of neatness.

Mr. Martin, of Edinburgh: To-morrow I have to hand in the Report of the Sub-Committee on Workshops. The object before us this afternoon is to consider "Technical Training and Education in Handicrafts, as a preparation for earning a Livelihood." I think we have come to this Conference to discover what we have been lacking in the past, and to endeavour to do better in the future. I can congratulate the City of London on the splendid Institutions it possesses for technical training and education in handicrafts. I do not mean to say that they are perfect, but certainly they have opportunities for teaching handicrafts which many of us might envy, but as I am afraid London stops short here, we must invite your special attention to the question of workshops for the blind, at our meeting to-morrow. In so far as early technical training is concerned, it has been sadly neglected in the past; and, as I have already said, we have great reason to congratulate Dr. Campbell on the improvements he has made at Norwood, which will greatly tend to improvement of the physique of the blind. That I shall lay down as a sine quâ non. By means of the Kindergarten System, early in youth, the blind can learn something of shape and form. I have met with blind young men, very well educated, who did not know the shape of a sailing vessel. Teachers of the blind have in the past forgotten that they exist for the purpose of becoming eyes to the blind. We have blind men grown up without the slightest knowledge of shape or form. The necessity of such instruction in the technical training of the blind is at once apparent. Again, it would surely be an easy

matter for teachers of the blind to tell them something of the growth and uses of the various articles which go to fill up a workshop for the blind, explain its machinery, &c. We want them to go forward form our schools for the blind with some knowledge of the things with which they will have to deal in the workshops. I must say that I adhere very decidedly to the Report as read, that we should train up our blind in one handicraft. I do not disapprove of a blind man eking out his living by doing many things at home, and doing marvellous things, but in so far as we are looking forward to the permanent employment of those men in after life, we think it advisable that we should teach them but one handicraft. We have in our Conference a blind gentleman, a basket-maker, and he has extended his trade after leaving the Institution until he has become a very large merchant. Some of these men, besides doing other things, are musicians; but so far as we are concerned let us make them tradesmen. I would rather make them perfect in one form of work only than make them indifferent workmen in more than one. We must make articles that can be disposed of. It is there we find ourselves in difficulties, namely in our competition in the markets of the day,

MR. J. B. MEESON: I am in favour of teaching two branches of trade where it can be done thoroughly, especially to those who have to follow their employment in country districts after they leave the Institution. We always start our female workers with chair-caning and then teach them brush-drawing. I fully agree with the Committee that technical training is very essential, as it is imperative that good work should be done by the blind because our bad work is excused not on account of the carelessness of the workers, but "they are blind, poor things, and cannot do better," I have often heard people say. It is our main business to satisfy the public that good work can and will be done by us, and then we shall have done a good deal towards gaining their support.

Mr. Martin: Basket-making will take a sighted man six or seven years to learn. I should never think of selecting a trade for a blind lad. I should ask him to select his own trade in the same way as I would deal with the sighted boy, if possible.

MR. PLATER: In dealing with the question of the Report of this Committee I notice that the one idea is the teaching of the blind by the blind, and the qualification for this teaching which is necessarily attached to it. I would ask the Secretary to just look at that Report, and tell the meeting how that qualification runs. It sounded very objectionable to me, and I think that it is a most important matter in the training of the blind. The best means of training them, or rather I believe the correct way of training the blind, is the adoption of that

system of teaching, which they have in after life to carry into practice. I am sure the success of any institution must be judged by its results. The institution turning out the most men able to get a living by their own energy and by the trades they are taught, is the most successful institution. Secondly, I contend that, as a rule, blind teachers are the right men to teach the blind handicrafts. If you want examples as to the results of the blind being taught by the blind, I learnt basket-making under the tuition of a man who has eye sight, but was assisted by blind associates. My experience brings me to this conclusion. that I learnt the most from those blind assistants; and it does seem to me only natural that such should be the case, because I found a sighted teacher only told me how to do a thing; the blind teacher worked with his hands, and showed me how to do it, and I followed the course of his hands. By employing blind teachers in basket-making, I believe you will turn out better workmen than you will by teaching with sighted persons. I do not pretend to say eyes are unnecessary, but I do say that, in a Blind Institution, the teachers should be blind, and they should be under the over-sight of some qualified basket-maker. The duties then of that qualified person would be less tedious, his whole time would be devoted to looking after both teacher and pupils. Some years ago, when visiting the workshop at the Birmingham Institution for the Blind, and finding a number of the pupils doing nothing, a thought came across my mind, are these poor lads going to stand about like this in course of training, if they are, what will become of them in after life? I thought then that an assistant blind teacher was necessary. I waited upon Miss Badger, the founder and lady Superintendent of the institution, at once explained my views to that lady, and a blind assistant teacher was employed with the most satisfactory results. I say it is only possible to teach the blind to make baskets perfectly on the lines they have to practice in after life. I have myself been a finishing teacher to many blind men after they have left school, in the way of making baskets. I am speaking from experience. I have taught men in my private capacity to make baskets, and the result of the teaching and experience is that, while I turn out baskets made by sighted and blind persons, principally by sighted, I say the greater number of these baskets might be made by the blind under proper tuition. Secondly, all that can be, should be made teachers. I hold that there are many new lines of business that can be introduced for the blind. Type-writing seemed to me, at first, quite startling. I will not attempt to reason the thing out: when I hear that they are used in America largely, and when I hear Dr. Campbell say so, I believe that what can be done by the blind in America, can be done by the blind here. Carrying out the idea with regard to boot making, I should say

that the fault of bad work lies in the fact that there was not enough attention and time devoted to the subject, or sufficient care exercised by the teachers to bring the thing to a successful issue, and I am sure it is worthy of the careful thought of every manager of institutions to see if boot making can be introduced into these institutions. Everybody wears boots, and they wear out. That brings me to a remark made by Mr. MacDonald, that some blind people in the West of England could not find a market for their goods. I say, the sooner they change the management the better, or the sooner they change their system the better. If they cannot find a market for the goods, then the goods are bad, or the management is bad. The men are blind, and bad work is the natural consequence of insufficient training; and, secondly, the case of the blind is damaged by every article sent out unless it is made first-class. Coming to London, Mr. Martin said, that there had been a great blank in London, and I agree with him thoroughly in all that he said up to the close. That blank in London had been mentioned before the Royal Commission. I have mentioned this to the Royal Commission, and others, and believe it is an awful blank that somebody is responsible for. There are thousands of baskets in use daily in Covent Garden and other markets, of which the blind do not make a dozen in a year. The only difficulty is that there is a bit of hard work in them. The man who won't work, be he blind or sighted, should have no assistance; but no stone should be left unturned to fortify the industrious blind, and here in London. you have room for a large manufactory for the making of fruit sieves. If your institution would only take the blind up, and show them how to make them, orders would come in by the thousands; but here are the blind of London-hundreds unemployed to-day who might gain a living, if a manufactory was started for their employment in the making of sieves, and other baskets, used in enormous quantities in London.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Report on Workshops for the Blind will be discussed to-morrow. The question before the Meeting is Technical Training, and Education in Handicrafts.

DR. ARMITAGE: Your Grace has anticipated the remark I was going to make. We have, I think, wandered from the subject under consideration this afternoon, though we have heard much which is of great importance to the blind. Mr. Plater's observations on the feasibility of employing large numbers of the blind in making baskets for market gardeners, were particularly interesting; but we must not forget that the subject for discussion this afternoon is not manufacturers but technical training; and in connection with this I would draw attention to the extreme importance of modelling, platting and Kindergarten games in general, which ought to be introduced into every school for the blind. It is a

special feature of all good Kindergarten work that it is systematised play, by which the children learn to use their fingers without feeling that they are having lessons. Kindergarten classes are now so common for the seeing that blind institutions ought to have no difficulty in obtaining teachers who might in a few days learn how to teach blind children if they passed a few days at the Primary School of the Royal Normal College, where we shall be glad to give them every opportunity of studying the methods there used, paper platting, paper folding, modelling, and various games; but hand-training ought to continue after the children leave the Kindergarten classes. Whatever the pupils are intended to do, the hand must be made dexterous and strong. In Paris turning is used as a hand-training, especially for the tuners. the Royal Normal College carpentering serves the same object, but is used as a hand-training for all, both boys and girls. I think carpentering is the very best hand-training that can be given to pupils who are too old for Kindergarten work. Blind children are as fond of making a noise as seeing children, and when they have learnt to make little boxes, brackets, trellis work for plants. &c., neatly, they are very proud of their performances, and are allowed to take them home to their parents in the holidays.

Mr. Keir of Aberdeen: I have listened with great pleasure to the paper and the remarks. I disagree, however, on one or two points. I do not agree with the suggestion of confining a man to one handicraft. Secondly about sighted supervision. Mr. Plater has said enough to prove that blind teachers are quite competent to do what is necessary. My experience has been that more can be learnt from a blind man sitting beside you in a workshop than can be taught by a sighted teacher, whose visits are casual, and whose sympathies are, naturally, less in touch with the pupil. To give an illustration of the results of sighted teaching. I may mention that in the Institution with which I am connected eleven pupils were supposed to be taught handicrafts. The whole amount of work done by them in one year amounted to nearly f,21. This, as you will see, could not afford an adequate opportunity to acquire an industrial training. I may add that the ages of the pupils ranged from 13 to 19 years. This can hardly be regarded as satisfactory, because when they come to support themselves they will be utterly unable to do so. During this Conference it may have been thought that I advocated a pension to all the blind, but there is no person more anxious to put them in a position to earn a living for themselves than I am, and the way to achieve that object is to give them a good industrial training; where that is not done, then a subsidy ought to be given. That is my opinion. I am quite aware that many managers of our institutions would be be glad to see matters mended, but I really think, with all due respect, that many of the superintendents lack the needful practical knowledge. I am satisfied that if blind teachers were employed better results would be attained.

DR. CAMPBELL: I know that His Grace is very much occupied, and as this discussion has already been prolonged beyond the time anticipated, I suggest that the discussion be postponed, and that we meet at 10 o'clock instead of 10.30 to-morrow morning. I think that the opinion of the Conference is that so far as the teaching of the blind is concerned, it should be thorough in all respects.

The discussion was then adjourned until the following morning.

A vote of thanks, on the proposition of Dr. Campbell, was accorded to His Grace for presiding as Chairman.

After the meeting the Duke kindly provided refreshment for those who were present.

THURSDAY, JULY 24th.

The Conference met at 10 a.m. to continue the adjourned debate on the Report from the Sub-Committee on "Technical Training and Education in Handicrafts as a preparation for earning a livelihood."

The chair was taken by Dr. Campbell.

A letter to Dr. Campbell from Mrs. Anderson, a member of the Glasgow School Board, was read by the Hon Sec., in which she expressed regret at the resolution passed on the 22th inst. in regard to Primary Education of the Blind, and suggested a "combination," whereby "a blind child should be trained for so many years in an ordinary Board School, say up to and inclusive of Standard V., and then sent to a special Training School to receive such instruction as may be found suited to his or her capacity, with a view to earning a livelihood."

It was moved by Mr. Plater, seconded by Mr. Keir, and carried that the best thanks of the meeting be given to the writer of the letter.

Mr. Buckle: I only desire to say a few words on the question of the subject of teaching one handicraft or more. I think that the paragraph was inserted with an idea that it would be a general rule. It was not intended thereby to draw a hard and fast line that all pupils should be taught only one trade. Nevertheless, it is better to do this than to be "Jack of all trades and master of

none." There are many instances, however, of blind men leaving the institution and taking up other things after. I know one blind man, a former pupil of the York School, living in a village near Harrogate, who is a farmer and a pig-jobber, who tunes all the pianofortes in the neighbourhood, and cleans the clocks in the village, and is an excellent bee-keeper, and organist at church. But this is really an exceptional case. I should vote the Report of the Committee be passed as it is at present. As a general rule you cannot expect institutions to teach more than one trade to each pupil, and it is not advisable that it should go from the Conference that they would be expected to do more than that.

Mr. Hall: In the discussion which took place yesterday I was inclined to support the amendment, because I considered that it should not be a hard and fast line, that only one handicraft should be taught to the blind. It is quite right that one trade should be taught thoroughly. In Swansea a number have gone from us to the villages, where a blind man cannot get his living from basket-making only. A basket-maker should know how to make mats, which would not in the least interfere with his efficiency as a basket-maker. I quite agree that where constant employment can be found in large towns, one trade only is the best; but where the men return home to small villages I think it it is desirable that they should know more than one trade or handicraft.

At this point the chair was taken by the Right Hon. Sir Lyon Playfair, K.C.B., M.P.

Dr. Campbell suggested that it would be best as an amendment to say "as a general rule."

Mr. Pine: I have much pleasure in suggesting that the Secretary should insert the words "as a general rule" in the paper on handicrafts. If the meeting accept this, I think it would provide for the point which has been raised, and it will then read, "not more than one handicraft as a general rule being taught to each individual." I do not think I need go further to explain that, or the reason why we inserted this clause, as we all know the time of training is frequently so limited that it is hardly possible we can teach successfully more than one trade, and that being so it is well that the learner should have a settled purpose in view. In reply to the remark of Mr. Carter on this point, yesterday, that their basket-makers learnt chair-caning, I may say that the clause was not intended to operate against that, as we do not consider chair re-seating a separate and distinct trade. This explanation will also apply to the remarks of Dr. Campbell as to preparatory training, and I think it an excellent plan for our pupils to be put to chair re-seating as a preliminary before taking up a handicraft. This is a light occupation and brings the fingers into training,

and the pupils are thus taught to begin to use their hands. At Nottingham all our pupils, including the adult outdoor, are, as a rule, taught chair re-seating before proceeding to a trade.

Mr. Carter: I shall be very pleased to withdraw the amendment if these words are inserted.

Mr. Pine, continuing: Mr. Martin also spoke, yesterday, in regard to the comparison between working the type writer and playing the piano. Of course I am fully aware that it is open to the argument that while in the case of the blind type-writer he has no means of reading or ascertaining for himself the accuracy of his work as he writes, the musician, on the other hand, knows, by means of his ear, whether he is playing correctly and has struck the proper chords. It is obvious, however, that this argument would only apply while he is learning a piece on the piano and that his ear would not *prevent* him from playing a wrong note. I believe it is quite possible for the blind person to so perfect himself in the use of the type-writer as to write correctly, especially when it is borne in mind that, unlike the piano, he has only to strike one letter at once. In support of this I may just refer you to an extract from another letter of Messrs. Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict as to raised keys. They state—

"We do not keep type-writers with embossed keys for the use of the blind in stock, but we can have machines fitted with them. However, of late years, we have found by actual practice that the blind learn the ordinary key board quite as readily without as with embossed keys."

I can only say in conclusion that the blind dowork these machines successfully in America, and therefore the difficulties must have been surmounted.

Dr. Campbell: The keys of the type-writer should be arranged on the same principle as the keys of a piano, some should be higher than others, so that the blind person would know the keys by their position. Rapidity in writing would certainly never be attained, if the blind writer was obliged to feel an embossed letter on each key.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the meeting is now in a position to accept the amendment not to make the rule hard and fast, but to put in the paper "as a general rule." This is an age of production by machinery. You wake one morning and find the whole trade swept away by machinery. Take an instance which occurred some time ago, the making of maleable iron. The trade woke up one morning to find that machinery substituted the puddling of iron by manual labour and had supplanted many employés. Now what I think institutions of this kind ought to do is to teach one trade, but at the same time to cultivate the intelligence of the pupils in the use of their hands; so that with their intelligence they may adapt themselves to any employment which they might

find answer if their own trade failed them. Therefore I think it best, as you have said, that, as a general rule, the teaching of one trade should be recommended, though an educated skill might adapt itself to the changes in industry.

Mr. Plater: I should like to move an amendment, with reference to the blind being taught, that "every facility be given to the blind for teaching." I do that for the reason, particularly bearing in mind that all institutions for the training of the blind are subscribed to for the benefit of the blind. There should be no stone left unturned which should be for the benefit of them pure and simple. I say that never in my life have I met with such a number of sighted persons who are interested in the blind. In pressing this change upon you it is in no spirit of opposition that I do it, but rather to assist them in doing the work they are doing so well. Perhaps it would be wiser instead of suggesting an alteration of the words, that we move as an amendment that this clause be removed. "These departments should be carried on under well skilled sighted assistants." Instead of "sighted supervision" let us say "skilled supervision," striking out the word "sighted."

Dr. Armitage: I am very glad indeed that this alteration has been suggested, because the rule laid down in the Report is contrary to experience. There are a great many workshops where the foreman or the manager is blind. Take the workshop at Bolton, for instance, which has been conducted for years by a blind man. I do not say that a blind man should not have the assistance of someone with sight upon whom he can rely, because he must have this. Take again the workshop at Preston. This is principally devoted to the making of mill-skips, and those made at Preston are excellent, both in quality and shape. The manager is entirely blind. When the Royal Commission visited Preston; the members surrounded the manager, who was sitting on his bench making a basket, and he was explaining to them an arrangment for shape of the skips. That was the secret of the great success of the Preston workshop, as a skip and basket manufactory. I went round the workshop, and then, after the other members of the Royal Commission had left, I went to the manager and told him who I was; he said "I am so glad to see you. Now I shall be able to explain my invention to you; these poor sighted people never can understand anything." We had a great laugh over it, and the Chairman insisted it should be put on the minutes.

Mr. Plater: I think we should recommend all managers of institutions to carry out the wishes of subscribers by finding employment for the blind in every possible way.

Mr. Keir: Before saying a single word, allow me in the name of the working blind to thank Dr. Armitage for his speech,

which to my mind was exceedingly appropriate. In reference to the matter before the meeting I am quite at one with Mr. Plater, when he says that the blind ought to get the preference. I say that only competent men can be made foremen or managers, and that in Blind Institutions the competent blind ought to get the preference. Any other arrangement would be unfair to our class, and this prejudice has existed too long. I venture to say that if Dr. Campbell had an industrial institution under his care the result would have been equally satisfactory. I may say that I consider if sighted supervision were to be laid down as a hard and fast rule it would be unfair. If I do not make it clearly understood, yet I feel in many cases that the blind are equally competent and have far more sympathy than the sighted. Therefore, I say that blind teachers and blind supervision should be preferred always where it can be had.

MR MOLDENHAWER: I am perfectly of the opinion that we ought to give the blind every facility of obtaining a situation; but I agree with Dr. Campbell that it is no good asking the blind to do things that they cannot do as well as the seeing. It seems to me that in reference to this question it would be better to place the older men under the care of a blind person for instruction, but when I consider that a number of persons have to be instructed in one place, I foresee some difficulty for the blind man to take care of them.

DR. CAMPBELL thought that the paragraph ought to be amended as follows: "under well-skilled supervision, not more than one handicraft, as a rule, being taught to each individual; and that every facility be given in the employment of blind teachers."

The amendment was carried.

Mr. W. Harris: I suppose that this meeting is a Conference, and that members are invited to give, as well as receive, information. I will therefore, with your permission, offer a few remarks. We have been considering the subject of elementary and technical education for the young. It seems to me that unless we also get help for adults we shall not have our requirements or expectations satisfied. Most of you are aware that a very small proportion of the blind are children. Most blind persons lose their sight after they are twenty-one. Therefore, we want help for adults of any age, It seems to me that the training need not be so long for the adult as for children. Able-bodied adults learn quickly if they wish to do so. All able-bodied blind should have a trial, if only for a year or so, and I think the pupils should not stay longer than is absolutely necessary for the training. They should not be compelled to stay a fixed number of years. One reason why the apprenticeship of the sighted is so long is that the employer may

get some return from the good service of the apprentice when he has become a really useful and valuable helper. With regard to stopping the flow of charity, there need be no fear of that, for we find that most of the blind always need it. I do not use the word "charity" in an offensive sense, I mean help. Unless the Government, or County Council, or someone provides help we shall not be able to do much, or do our work well. We cannot have good officers, buildings, plant, &c., without plenty of money. We have only to look at this beautiful College to see what can be done, but we must remember what a vast sum of money it has cost. I would say that the County Council should provide and own the necessary buildings, plant, &c., of the Institution, so that they might at any time be sold or removed when not required. With regard to the occupations of the blind, I should prefer that they find employment, if possible, amongst their own people, at any kind of occupation which they can perform, and which they find profitable. One of the speakers this morning, I mean Mr. Plater, appears to have been very successful. I would remind you that he had health, ability, opportunity, industry, and last, but not least, capital, either cash or credit. He had a good name, which is better than great riches. I have just been told that he started in business with absolutely nothing. He must have had a good name and fair fame or he would not have been able to start. Do blind people generally possess all these qualifications which led to success? I have in my hand a printed statement, a review of the results of fifty years efforts of the New York Institution for the Blind, published in the year 1885, which shows some of the results of the education there given, and names the occupations followed by old pupils. I will not trouble you with the whole of the paper, but with your permission I will read the list of occupations mentioned. Amongst intellectual pursuits are those of lawyers, physicians, clergymen, phrenologists, organists, pianotuners, authors (scientific and literary), and teachers of literature and music. Amongst commercial pursuits: merchants, speculators, grocers, stationers, book-agents, pedlars, life and fire insurance. Amongst skilled labour: carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, basket or willow workers, chair-makers, safe-makers, basketmakers, farmers, moulders, stone-cutters, and tanners. Amongst unskilled labour: labourers, miners, wood-sawyers, oystermen. To this list is added the following remarks:—"After all with the blind as with the seeing, the education at the school is only the stepping-stone. In after life we all must use our own muscle, our own will to mount higher. It is the resolute determination not to depend upon the fitful charity of the world, but to rely on one's own self alone to be the builder of one's own welfare, that leads to the best results." I won't read more.

The Chairman then put to the meeting that the Report, as

amended, be adopted, and the Resolution was carried. (The Report is printed herewith, as amended.)

The CHAIRMAN then called on Mr. Pine (in the absence of the Secretary, Mr. Martin) to read the Report from the Sub-Committee on

WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND.

Workshops for the Blind should be located in Commercial centres where a demand for the articles produced by the blind exists.

For example, Baskets—where large quantities of baskets of uniform shape and size are required, such as a town in Lancashire for Cotton Skips, &c.; the fruit-growing districts of Worcestershire; Penzance for Cornish Potato and Vegetable Baskets and Crates.

Other examples easily suggest themselves.

- 2.—Sale Shops should be established at all Workshops, and these ought to be in principal thoroughfares, and made as attractive as possible. A little money spent in this way will yield a good return. Visitors to the Sale Shop should be invited to see the workers.
- 3.—When blind men are found energetic and trust-worthy, they should be sent out to solicit orders for goods, and blind men might be appointed agents for certain localities in which it might not be advisable to establish workshops.
- 4.—Institutions should ever be ready to combine to take up contracts or large orders, and divide as agreed.
- 5.—All the Institutions should be ready to promote the sale of the manufactures of the others.
- 6.—Business should be carried on on strictly commercial lines, and wages should be regulated entirely by rates in districts, as paid to ordinary tradesmen, and should rise and fall accordingly, though the Institution should take no lead. If supplement is found necessary, it should be added from voluntary contributions, and should be shown separately and kept distinct in the accounts throughout.
- 7.—In every department of trade no effort or expense should be spared to secure the services of the very best tradesmen as foremen, &c., for training the blind. *Cateris paribus*, the blind to be preferred.
- 8.—As preparatory to industrial training Kindergarten should be insisted on, in order to give pupils ideas of shape. &c. Phy-

sical exercises in an enjoyable form, such as gymastics, swimming, &c., should receive careful attention.

- 9.—Illustrated lessons should be given on subjects connected with handicrafts in Institutions, with the view of giving pupils a theoretical knowledge of the work in which they may afterwards be engaged. Care should be taken to treat them as nearly as possible on the footing of sighted boys and girls.
- 10.—About the age of 16 years the juvenile blind should be regularly apprenticed to their various trades, like sighted boys; but as much depends on their early training, boys should receive careful technical instruction concurrently with their intellectual training, and be encouraged to handle tools of every description.
- rigidly enforced in every workshop, and the blind should be encouraged to do all they can to support themselves.
- 12.—In basket-making, to attain uniformity of size and shape frames should be used, but every effort should be made to attain perfection without their aid.
- 13.—Where possible, division of labour should be introduced—oftentimes the blind can do a certain portion of work connected with an article which a sighted, partially-sighted, or more gifted blind person may be required to finish.
- 14.—The Sub-Committee does not consider it necessary to give a list of employments for the blind, but they earnestly recommend Managers of Industrial Institutions to consult the guide prepared by Messrs. Turner and Harris of Leicester.
- 15.—The Sub-Committee desire to have suggestions sent in to them of new Departments for the Blind.

They suggest for consideration-

Light Basket-making for Females.

The manufacture of Whip Thongs.

Paper Bag making.

Cork cutting.

Type-writing.

Type-witting.

Missionary work.

Massage.

Agriculture.

Sale of Newspapers.

Dramatic Recitations, &c.

16.—The Sub-Committee suggests that any Manager who discovers a Department, which he has not introduced, being carried on at another Institution, should not hesitate to ask the

fullest information, so as to ascertain if it were at all possible to increase the number of his blind employés.

- 17.—All Workshops should be inspected by Government Inspectors under Factory Acts. If this is not practicable, someone thoroughly qualified might be appointed and paid *pro rata* by all the Institutions.
- 18.—Managers of Institutions should form an association amongst themselves for correspondence and annual conference. This might develop into an association for the purchase of materials and sale of manufactured goods.
- Dr. Campbell: In order to expedite matters I move the adoption of the Report.

MR. PLATER: I feel that I have a very limited time to speak and shall remember this. The wages question is most important to the blind. I should like to add to Clause 6 that where it was impossible to agree to the wages, seeing that an ordinary working man in so many hours of the week is unable to earn 15s. per week, that that sum be made up to him out of the funds subscribed to the institution for the benefit of the blind. Let his wages be made up to him so as to enable him to live. As a private manufacturer who employs the blind I can only pay the wages of the district, as I have to compete with people in the same way of business. But there should be an advantage for the blind workmen in manufactories, subscribed to for their assistance. My contention is that such would be in harmony with the wish of any subscriber who would not send their money to an institution for the blind unless they felt it was used for the benefit of the blind. Where wages are high, as in one or two institutions in the North of England or Scotland, and to my mind ample, they do not need assistance; but where you have a district in which wages are lower, and where you have men who through sickness, weakness, or any cause other than idleness, are unable to earn 15s. per week, I say that it becomes the duty of managers of such institutions to assist them to that amount. Institutions are subscribed to for the purpose of benefiting the industrious blind. put 15s, as a minimum sum, as I do not think it possible for a man to live on less. It certainly is a surprise to me how some people do and keep respectable. It is a sort of existence, not living. Now, as there are so many large-hearted persons here interested in the blind, I would like them to tell us what can be done to meet these requirements. My idea is to stimulate self-help; and you cannot therefore consistently put up your workshop in opposition to a blind manufacturer who has started business in the district.

Mr. Carter: I shall confine my remarks to paragraph 6, upon which Mr. Plater has already made some observations, viz., that business should be carried on on strictly commercial lines,

and wages should be on a regular scale. It appears to me that the Committee have come to a right conclusion upon this point, though the Committee of the Institution which I represent think the best way of supplementing wages paid to the blind, in accordance with rates paid to sighted people, is to give them something beyond the sighted rate of wages. The disadvantage of that system is this, that the best workers get the greatest amount of charitable help. Those men who are able to earn 25s, per week get the most assistance. But what my Committee say is that it is better to make a blind man feel that he is earning his living, and not receiving any assistance in the way of charity. Now, as I say, I entirely agree with what the Committee here recommend; for there is also this objection to our practice, that it does not appear upon our reports, where the system is adopted, what we give as higher rate of wages, and the subscribers do not know what the managers are doing. We pay the blind according to the amount of work they are able to perform, by piece work. They obtain something like twenty or twenty-five per cent, above the ordinary brush-makers' wages. I should like very much to know the opinion of the blind themselves upon this question, as I understand from what Mr. Plater says that he approves of the remarks in this Report.

Mr. Colin MacDonald, of Dundee: I am sorry I cannot approve of the first proposition in the Committee's Report. To my mind the proposal to establish an Institution or Workshop in every commercial centre is most unwise, as well as quite unnecessary. The immediate effect of the carrying out of such a proposal would be the crippling of existing institutions, most of which largely depend on the support they receive from other commercial centres. The management of all institutions knows how difficult it is to find steady employment for the inmates, and how wide a radius has to be canvassed for orders to keep the workshops going. So great is the difficulty in Scotland, at any rate, to find a market for the accumulated produce of the blind, that the institutions even are competing with each other for the trade of the public. This being so, would it be wise to increase such workshops? Within a radius of forty miles of Dundee for instance, there are several large towns which would claim to be "commercial centres," and the natural result of planting workshops in them would be to withdraw the support at present given to our institution. The multiplication of workshops would also mean a considerable outlay for shop rent, plant, sighted supervision, &c., all of which in my opinion are quite unnecessary. The larger institutions can do all the work that the district can give it, and the blind from other centres can be received into it provided these towns supply orders to keep the men employed. To my mind this would meet the whole case. The question has

been asked, what are we to do with the aged blind who cannot learn a trade? The same question was asked at the York conference, and I mentioned the manufacture of firewood as a suitable employment. The Dundee Institution carries on perhaps the largest business in this department of any of the institutions. We have twenty-five employed at it. The wages earned are from eight to fifteen shillings a week. The turnover of firewood last year was £1,296. I have in contemplation a new industry, which can be worked along with the firewood. I refer to the manufacture of fire lighters.* The sawdust made from the firewood can be utilized for this, the machinery required for moulding the lighters is inexpensive, and can easily be managed by a blind man, whilst women can readily make the lighters up in bundles. I may mention that I have fitted up a workshop for this trade, and as soon as I get back to Scotland, I shall have the work put into operation. The demand for lighters, especially in large cities, is considerable, and I have no doubt my project will be successful.

Mr. J. E. Sutton said: I have the honor of representing the Surrey Association for the general welfare of the blind. You are doubtless aware that in London there are several institutions which provide workshops for the blind. There is also a large training school in the South of London, which, in my opinion, should only be used for that purpose, and not as a workshop. Although there are workshops for the blind scattered over the Metropolis, yet there is no central office where a blind person could apply to for information or assistance; what is required is the establishment of an office on similar lines to that of the Charity Organization Society. At our Institution we have a number of blind workers, male and female, employed in making baskets, mattrasses, fish bags, chair caning, firewood chopping, sash lines, etc., but so far as our experience goes, it is impossible for a blind workshop to be self-supporting. The blind by themselves are incapable of competing with sighted labour, and institutions must be subsidized by donations and subscriptions from the public. I think there is scope enough in London for all the blind institutions, and there is no reason why an institution in the West of London should be anxious to extend its sphere of operations in our part of London. I fully approve of that part of the report which says that blind workshops should be officially inspected; to my knowledge, we have never been favoured with a visit from the inspector. Allow me to speak of the institution I am connected with, we endeavour to find work for our employés, and when work is brisk our blind earn good wages; during the time we had a contract for the Parcels Post,

^{*} Note.—The new department referred to was started in September last, and is being prosecuted with great success in the Dundee Institution. There are already five blind persons employed in the manufacture of the lighters, and Mr. Macdonald writes "that he hopes shortly to employ as many more."

our basket makers earned from twenty to thirty shillings per week. We have a carpenter who never earns less than one pound a week. It is always gratifying to hear of a fresh employment for the blind, but I think type-writing is more sentimental than practical. Take for instance a man of business, he dictates a letter to his type-writer, he has it read, makes alterations, and then has it re-written. The sighted type-writer can do this, but were a blind person employed, a sighted person would also be required to assist, so I do not think type-writing is an employment for the blind.

MR. W. HARRIS: I beg to offer some remarks on this report. With regard to paragraph No. 2, we know how bitterly we ourselves complain of the competition with Government or other public establishments where unpaid labour is used. For example, in prisons. We must be careful not to do ourselves what we condemn in others, we must not undersell ordinary tradesmen. With regard to paragraph No. 4, yes, certainly. It has been mentioned that at a certain manufactory more orders were received than could be executed. If application had been made to other institutions they would have been glad to help, even if no profit were secured. With regard to paragraph 7, certainly, and I would remark that to increase our usefulness, or indeed continue our work, we must have money, or help of some kind. Will the Government help us in any way? The present bill does not provide for adults, nor for the start after pupilage. In Leicester we have a very heavy debt on our workshops, and can only afford to pay our manager £,100 a year. We cannot expect to secure the services of an experienced, active tradesman to manage for only £100 a year. Nos. 8, 9, and 10 refer more to schools for children, so I make no remark. With regard to No. 12. I think it is very important that the blind should have as little special apparatus as possible. No 14, if this paragraph is allowed to stand, I will ask that the name of Mansfield Turner, with whom I was joint compiler of the guide be placed before my name. Under No. 15, suggestions may be made, but it should be remembered that an occupation suitable for one place is not necessarily suitable for another. Under No. 17, I suppose it is the duty of Government Inspectors of factories to visit workshops for the blind, as well as ordinary workshops, and I know that an inspector has visited our workshops at Leicester. With regard to No. 18, I should like to refer to the statement in the report of the Royal Commission on this subject, namely, that Leicester recommends a new institution. In the first place, Leicester did not recommend anything, but Mr. William Harris stated his own opinion that there should be an office where information of every kind relating to the blind could be obtained by anyone. The exact words in paragraph 16,460 of the evidence are:—"It would not be an institution for the purpose of educating or employing the blind, so much as a sort of club house, where people could get any information of any description relating to the blind, together with the use of a library of books, &c., relating to the blind." Also paragraph No. 16,475.
—"Yes, but only a place to obtain intelligence. I do not propose that all goods should be sent to London." I should interfere as little as possible with other people, but I would have an office of record where each institution could get information at once.

MR. HALL: It would be a good thing if employment could be obtained at a workshop, or Institution for Blind persons to be established, say, in Worcestershire, where fruit baskets are required; and, I suggest, that steps be taken from this Conference to confer with gentlemen in Worcestershire for the purpose of carrying out this recommendation. As to paragraph six, I am sorry to say that I disagree with Mr. Plater. If wages are made up to the amount he suggests, industry is discouraged; but I agree with the suggestion of supplementing the wages to the blind, and keeping the amount that is supplemented separately, so that it can be seen what they earn, and what is given by the public. We have some men in our workshops earning eighteen shillings or more, per week; others, from want of ability or strength, earn only seven or eight shillings per week. It would be quite impossible to make up all wages to fifteen shillings. I heartily support the suggestion of Mr. Harris that there should be a central office where information could be obtained about all Institutions, and I would suggest that the Secretary of the Conference should communicate and get information from every source, so that he may be able to give information to others.

Mr. Keir, after stating that he had received no intimation of the Conference from the Institution for the Blind at Aberdeen, said: In my opinion we have now reached the most important item in the programme of this Conference. There is no doubt that all our talk finds its practical outlet in the workshop. We must have workshops distributed more numerously than they are at present. In regard to the first paragraph, there is much necessity for it. I really think that if we enter into the consideration of this fact, that in Scotland out of the total number of Blind there are only about five or six hundred employed in Institutions, and that the total number of blind amounts to over 3,000 there is much room left for institutions to do good practical work among these. With regard to paragraph three, I object to a distinction of this sort being made in the selection of teachers. With regard to paragraph six, where it says that a sum of money should be given to those who cannot earn enough for themselves, I quite agree with that. In our institution, when the year's wages are paid, one-third of the amount is put down as a supplement. This is obviously unfair to skilled workmen, who do not get the benefit of the supplement and who do not require it, and, therefore, should not be credited with getting it. At paragraph seven, I have an Amendment to make. I should have it to read in this way, "That in every department of trade competent blind men should be employed as foremen, etc., for training the blind, and that sighted assistants should be confined to such finishing work as is beyond the powers of the blind." In speaking to this Amendment, I am quite sure that it requires no eloquence to make this clear to you. My case is good. Our friend, Mr. Macdonald, tells me that in Dundee he has employed a blind traveller, and that he doubled the amount of sales over the sighted man who previously held his position. This shows the capability of the blind as business men.

Mr. Macdonald, of Glasgow: Although I have no practical experience in the management of workshops for the blind, yet this is a subject in which I am deeply interested, and to which I have given some thought. Owing to my connection with the Mission to the Blind in Glasgow I come in contact with a good many blind people. One of the greatest difficulties we have met with, is to find employment for them. I need not remind you that a very large proportion of the blind lose their sight in after life, and the result is that in a very short time they are reduced to great poverty. I approve, generally, of the recommendations in the Report, and I should like to see most of these suggestions put in practical operation. We are much in need of a greater number of workshops for the blind, in which those who lose their sight in adult life could find suitable employment. I would not say they should be elaborately fitted up with machinery and plant, but there should be opportunities for employing this section of the blind in a greater number of centres than at present. I think that, as the result of this Conference, the Technical and Industrial Training of the Blind should be considerably improved so as to produce more marketable goods, and, therefore, get a better outlet. After we have done that, however, we will still have a large number of blind unemployed, willing to get bread by the labour of their hands. This is a problem we have been trying to solve in Glasgow and in the West, and I should like to tell you what we have done in the way of providing employment. Of the 1,300 blind persons on our roll about fifty per cent. were deprived of sight between the ages of twenty and sixty. The average loss in wages to a man amounts to something like eighteen shillings per week, after losing sight. Until something better has been

provided we have been trying to find employment of a kind for all who are able and willing to work. I hold in my hand a series of tables prepared at the end of last year, showing the result of a scheme we have in operation for assisting the adult blind to start in various trading pursuits on their own accounts. During the time that this fund has been in operation, we have assisted something like 150 blind men by giving them grants of money; and of these, 122 who received £646, or a average of £56s, each, to begin with, have earned the total sum of £7170. Their earnings vary from forty shillings to four shillings per week. Tea and drapery would appear to be the most popular trade, but coals and firewood the most profitable.

MR. BUCKLE: I should like, in the first place, to say how much I feel personally obliged to this Sub-Committee for their very careful and sensible report. I am, however, extremely sorry that one member of the Committee, I mean Mr. Plater, should feel it desirable to alter paragraph six, so as to make it read that every blind man in an institution workshop should have his wages made up to fifteen shillings a week. We have heard much in this room about having blind men treated equal to seeing workmen. I do not say that seeing workmen are either better or worse than blind workmen; but I put it to this meeting— Could anything more demoralising be devised in the country than a plan to raise every man's earnings to fifteen shillings a week? And, as certainly, I unhesitatingly say that no more demoralising plan could be devised for the blind. Besides, see how it would hamper the managers of blind workshops if they were expected to follow any such plan. Our friend says, "What good then are institutions to the Blind?" Why, my reply is this, "They find employment for the blind," Ordinary workshops might employ them. In some very rare instances they do; but in the majority of cases they will not. The question of supplementing wages must be left to institutions themselves.

DR. Armitage: Mr. Buckle has almost taken the words out of my mouth. I do hope that my friend Mr. Plater will withdraw that suggestion with regard to having a fixed minimum of wages and supplementing them up to a certain point. From all that I have seen in workshops for the blind all over the country, I think that no more mischievous thing could possibly be done, than to say that a blind man or woman shall earn a certain wage. I think it would be the most demoralising thing that could be adopted, and therefore I hope that the terms of proposition six will be adhered to. There is only one point more that I want to touch on and that is to say that I sent out invitations to every institution and organisation for the blind of which I knew with the request that if they knew any one in their neighbourhood who would wish to attend the Conference, that they should communicate with them.

Aberdeen was one of the institutions to which such invitation was sent, and therefore, if Mr. Keir did not get previous information, it was not my fault.

Mr. West suggested that the last clause of paragraph 17 be omitted, but to the first part he saw no reasonable objection. He considered the Report defective in one important particular, and that was that it gave no general statement as to the average earnings of men and women employed in the different institutions for the blind. He spoke in favour of the business at institutions being carried on upon commercial lines.

Mr. Plater: I withdraw what I suggested for insertion in clause six as to a minimum wage.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not think I shall take up five minutes. Mr. Keir thinks that the Aberdeen institution failed in its duty in not giving him notice of the Conference, which notice that institution must have received long ago from London. I may say that the first notice I had was from the Braille Magazine, "Progress" (which I presume is within the reach of Mr. Keir), and it was only a few days previous to the Conference that I received an official notification of the same. I should just like to add one suggestion regarding a profitable employment for blind females. I believe that the system of training girls for massage (that is, as medical rubbers) has been tried in more than one institution in this country with good success, and I do not see why our girls should not undergo a course of training to undertake this work. I think that it might be made a profitable source of employment for many blind females, as doubtless some ladies would prefer a blind medical rubber. I wish this suggestion to be added to paragraph 15 as one of the possible employments of blind females.

Mr. Martin: I am very sorry that you allowed this Resolution to pass, because out of all the questions we are dealing with this is the most important with regard to the blind. There is one thing I should like to say regarding an establishment of workshops for the blind. It is a long time ago since shops were established for the blind. In the ancient city of Pekin, Marco Polo, the great traveller, relates that he found many noble institutions founded by the ancient kings largely endowed enjoying many privileges; 200 blind men provided with houses, employed on Government work; doctors and priests appointed to attend them and their families. The first suggestion in the paper is with reference to workshops being located in Commercial centres, where the demand exists. It would not be desirable to locate an institution for the blind in a country district where there is no demand at all. Then considering this paragraph from a more general point of view, the trouble is the position of these places in the city of London.

London has institutions for training, where are the workshops for the blind? Mr. Chairman, it is thirty years since I first raised this question, but it remains very much the same even now. The blind trained in the London schools are at this moment begging in the streets by hundreds. Let us have workshops where all the blind may be employed. I have been more than thirty years connected with institutions for the blind, and I have often observed that there are a number of fine young men engaged in our workshops, and why should London be behindhand? Then another general question with regard to institutions for the blind is that they should not do business for the sake of doing it. The aim of the institution should be to employ the blind, and not to let anything pass a blind person in order to employ a sighted person. I am glad my friend, Mr. Plater, has withdrawn the recommendation to raise every man's wage to 155, per week, as it would remove all stimulus to blind workers. In one of our departments in which we employ a considerable number of blind persons we pay the men 14s. per week; recently one of those men misbehaved himself, the punishment was that he should go on piecework: he can now earn 24s. per week! If we had sufficient work in the mattress department we could get on well, but in that department we cannot keep men constantly at work. I should like to point out to our blind friends that very often the blind can do a certain amount of work which the sighted can finish, although nothing is more alien to our wishes than to take sighted persons and give them employment.

Mr. Townson, of Accrington, and Mr. Hallett, of Cardiff, also spoke with reference to the report.

MR. PINE: The only point I desire to say a few words upon in connection with this subject is the very important one of wages (No. 6). At the time these propositions were forwarded to me as a member of this Sub-Committee the terms of this recommendation were that the blind should be paid according to the wages prevailing in the district, and the profit returned to them in the shape of a supplement. I was unable to accept the recommendation as it then stood, as the word "profit" seemed to me a very uncertain one. To my mind it was rather an open question as to what could absolutely be considered as profit, and further I feared that many of our institutions so far from making a profit upon their industries, have to lament a considerable loss. I, therefore, submitted the resolution as it now stands, which was adopted by my colleagues, as being to my mind the truer principle on which to work. I think we must all be agreed that the industries at institutions should be conducted on strictly commercial lines. That being the case, and bearing in mind the fact that we are compelled to go into the world's markets, and enter into keen competition with ordinary traders, it is obvious that the wages must be regulated accordingly, rising and falling as the case may be, though it would be unwise and unnecessary of course for institutions to in any way lead. If anything is given beyond this, it should not be a higher rate for work done, but a supplement pure and simple taken from the voluntary resources of the institutions, and not in any way mixed up with or included in the ordinary business accounts. In the institution with which I have the honour of being connected we have the two departments of indoor institutions and workshops comprised within one building. The accounts are kept entirely distinct, and the whole of the subscriptions and other voluntary help go to the support of the indoor, the only credit of the workshops being the amount received for sales. Competition is with us very severe indeed, and in some parts of the country is much more keen than in others, consequently the rate of wages varies considerably. I should very much like to have the opinion of this Conference on this question of supplement, as to whether it is generally in favour of the principle, and if it is deemed desirable, I should be glad to have some expression of opinion as to the most judicious method of regulating it. I am very glad that Mr. Plater has withdrawn his suggestion of a minimum wage of fifteen shillings per week, for I could not regard such a proposition or system as other than demoralising, while it would in my judgment be thoroughly impracticable. If we could arrive at some distinct and universal understanding on this question of wages and supplement, I think it would be of great benefit.

As Sir Lyon Playfair had to leave the chair at this juncture on account of another pressing engagement, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to him on the motion of Dr. Campbell, who subsequently took the chair, and said: I want this subject to have as much time given to it as possible, but Mr. Marston is obliged to leave by the next train, and therefore I beg that we may hear his paper immediately. This proposal being agreed to—

The Rev. H. J. R. Marston said: There is one department upon which I am going to speak, and that is farming. I wish to impress upon the mind of this Conference that there is an important opening in agriculture for intelligent blind persons. You do not require in the pursuit of agriculture any extraordinary knowledge or intelligence. The average farmer has not great powers of mind. The farmer, however, possesses qualities which I think are within the compass of the blind, and upon this I wish to speak more particularly, because this department lies clearly within easy reach of a considerable number of the boys entrusted to our care. We will take seriatim the several departments which are open to an educated blind man in the agricultural world. There is no reason I think why he should not thoroughly

understand all the simpler farming operations, such as ploughing, harrowing, draining, ditching, &c. These are matters which any man taught in a good school is in a position to exercise himself upon, and with intelligence he has a reasonable chance of success. In judging of cattle he must rely upon touch, a sheep is a very tangible thing, so is a cow. A horse is a little more difficult to manage. A gentleman told me of a blind man who was the best judge of fox hounds in the county. A fortiori, a blind man should be able to judge whether a cart-horse is in good condition, and well constituted for farm work. I think we could easily teach boys the art of pruning and trimming trees, and of clearing away the superfluous branches to let in light and The management of standing crops is more difficult. operation would require some knowledge and enterprise. Mr. Buckle has mentioned a successful farmer and bee-keeper who is blind. That a blind man can handle bees sounds marvellous. Bees are hardly what we would call tangible creatures. apologise for so roughly indicating what would have been the drift of my paper, You will see that this is kindred to the question before us. It is a question not indeed of workshops, but of manual work. If you will kindly accept these remarks, I hope that what I have said may turn out to the practical good of the blind. Now for one or two more departments. There is dramatic recitation. Some of you have heard Mr. Brandram recite. There is no reason why a clever blind boy or girl should not make a considerable impression on the public by following the example set by that distinguished artist. This is an occupation which can easily be joined to others. I do not know how far this art is taught here; it is taught to some extent in Worcester; but this is a calling which all who have the instruction, management, and training of young people must agree does want a special faculty. Again, there are what I may call the minor parts of the profession of Divinity, the home teaching of the blind by the blind; the office of Scripture Reader, and perhaps that of City Missionary. With these points, which I have hastily laid before you, I shall resume my seat, and hope that the discussion may flow on without interruption.

After a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Marston had been passed, the discussion on the report of the Sub-Committee on Workshops was resumed.

MR. J. B. MEESON: With reference to sale shops, I do think there should be one connected with every institution for the sale of goods made by the blind and otherwise. They ought also to be in the best positions possible for selling the goods, as the public will not go far out of their way even for the benefit of the blind. Committees very often hold back from taking up good positions in a town because of the high rents, but it could

be managed by letting off the upper rooms for offices, as only the lower rooms are needed for a retail trade, and the stock could be kept at the workshops in a less expensive part of the town. I also advocate the establishing of agencies in the town and district, and where you can find blind persons for agents let them have the goods on sale or return. I think the Committee's suggestion, "that institutions should purchase each others' manufactures," a good one. The rate of wages should be the same as paid to sighted workers; and any supplement to them should be according to the hours worked, and the charge for the same should be debited to the general fund and not to trading I think that a suggestion might go from this Conference to the Gardner Trust Committee, that they should establish a central office where information might be collected and supplied, when wanted, on all matters relative to the welfare of the blind.

Mr. Hewitt: I have only a very few practical remarks to make, and will not keep you long. In Clause twelve of the Workshops Report, we recommend the use of frames to obtain a uniformity of shape and size in the manufacture of baskets. Some years ago Dr. Armitage paid us a visit in Belfast, and while inspecting our workshops and manufactures, he suggested that we should try the effect of frames or shapes for the use of the blind in doing their work. I believe he said he had seen it done in Canada with very good results. I promised to give it a trial, and did so, and am happy to say the result has been most satisfactory. I have been complimented on the show of exhibits we have in the Exhibition, and may say that a great deal of the neatness of that work is due to the use of these frames. I would strongly press upon the Managers of Institutions the advisability of using them whenever and wherever possible. We find they improve the appearance of the work, in chairs, flower stands, flower baskets, flower pot covers, round and barrel-shaped linen baskets, cradles, travelling hampers, dolls' cradles, pic-nics, dress stands, laundry baskets, and also in shaping the legs of tables, etc. I do not approve of the second part of the Clause, where it is suggested that "every effort should be made to obtain perfection without them." My experience is the blind can turn out their work much more neatly and as quickly when accustomed to the shapes as without them, and even should they not turn out their work so quickly, I would prefer paying the blind extra to use the shapes in order to obtain the superior work they enable them to make. I have brought one or two samples of work with me to show what can be done. The flower basket you all see in my hand was made on a frame by a blind girl, after only six weeks' training. She can make three in a day, and I expect in a short time she will be able to increase that number.

Formerly we paid a man $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. for making these; this girl will be able to make them for about $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Mr. Martin: Why did you pay the man 9½d. for making them?

Mr. Hewitt: Well, perhaps we paid him too much; but we have no regular scale for these baskets in Belfast, and we paid him 9\frac{1}{2}d., being, as we considered, about the rate of wages he was able to make on other work.

Mr. Plater (Birmingham): I say that basket is worth 7d., making.

Mr. Hewitt: I think I have now finished my few remarks; but before sitting down I wish to say, should any Member of the Conference desire to have any further information on the subject, I shall be very happy to supply it, and shall also be pleased to supply sample shapes, if any wish to have them, at cost price.

On the motion of Mr. Sime, seconded by Mr. Hall, the adoption of the Report, as amended, was agreed to unanimously.

On the motion of Dr. Campbell, a Sub-Committee was appointed, consisting of Dr. Armitage, Messrs. Buckle, Hewitt, Martin, and Pine, to make arrangements for the next Conference.

The Meeting then adjourned until the afternoon.

THURSDAY, JULY 24th (Afternoon Meeting).

The chair was taken at 3.0 p.m., by W. S. SETON-KARR, Esq., who said: Ladies and Gentlemen—I felt some little hesitation in taking the chair this afternoon, but I believe I owe my position to Dr. Campbell's kindness, and partly owing to the fact that I have been for some years engaged in the administration of the well-known Gardner's Trust. The French had somewhat anticipated us in devising means for the instruction of the blind, and more than thirty years ago I was much gratified by a visit paid to the Institution des Jeunes Aveugles, just at the back of the Chamber of Deputies in Paris. But of late years we have seen some very excellent institutions arising in all parts of the United Kingdom; in Edinburgh, at Sheffield, Manchester, York, and other northern towns; in London and the Southern Counties, for the home teaching and for the technical education of the blind; and, above all, in the Norwood College, which, if I may

use the expression, has attained to something like the rank of a University as regards music. In all these and similar institutions we have done something to reach the standard of America and France. In considering educational results we must remember that there is fully as much difference in the capacity of the blind as there is in that of sighted persons. All blind persons are not necessarily musical; all are not equally quick with their fingers; and some take much longer time than others to learn any handicraft or trade at all. But, as a general rule, it may be laid down that most blind persons could be taught some one trade, and could learn to read and write on the system of Braille or of Moon. Any one result which, in fact, raises them above the itinerant musician of the streets or of the low music halls may be termed satisfactory. I augur some excellent results from the papers read and the views interchanged at this Conference. It is by conference, by comparison of different methods, by interchange of ideas and experience, that ultimate success is ensured. I will now call on Mr. H. J. Wilson, the able Secretary of the Gardner's Trust, to read a translation of a French paper, which I feel sure will be received with an intelligent appreciation of its merits.

Mr. Wilson: I have been asked to read a translation of a paper by Monsieur Maurice de la Sizeranne, Délégué of the Council of Administration of the "Société de Placement et de Secours," and General Secretary of the "Association Valentin Haüy pour le bien des Aveugles." I may say that I saw the paper for the first time last night, and as it took me more than half-anhour to read, I purpose, with M. Sizeranne's permission, which has been kindly granted, to omit the first part, which consists of introduction, &c., and to read the portion which more immediately refers to the working of the Société de Placement et de Secours. I am sure we are all glad to welcome M. de la Sizeranne, whose zeal and energy on behalf of the blind are well known, not only in France but throughout the United Kingdom.

Translation of Paper by M. de la Sizeranne, on-

SOCIÉTÉ DE PLACEMENT ET DE SECOURS.

I .- Introduction.

A Society of Patronage is the indispensable complement of a School for the Blind. It is in those classes of society which are the poorest that the greatest number of blind children are found; firstly, because those classes are the most numerous, and secondly, because poverty, over-crowding and want of care bring on or intensify many of the diseases which induce blindness. Our special schools are therefore chiefly devoted to the children I clonging to this class; on this account their teaching ought to

be more technical than intellectual. It is necessary that the blind person on leaving school should have a trade or a professional art, qualifying him to earn his living. But when, at the age of nineteen or twenty, the young men and young women leave the school, their education being finished, the task, strictly so called, of the school is also ended; and yet, has the work of the social raising of the blind been completed? No!

To be *capable* of gaining a living, to have a profession, is not sufficient for a livelihood, there must still be found an opportunity for using the knowledge acquired, and this, for the blind, is the most difficult problem. A person gifted with sight, who has received a good education, and good training suitable to the material and moral position of his family, is likely, if he has activity and a fair chance, to find means for exercising his profession without recourse to the help of strangers. But for the blind it is different; he can only move in a narrow sphere, so that, where the seeing would easily find work, the blind experience the greatest difficulty in obtaining even the smallest order; and, lastly, the choice of his profession will have had to be determined more by his own personal aptitude than by the relation existing between this profession and the occupation of his family. is why the blind person, on leaving school, is nearly always in need of material and moral assistance, or else he runs the risk of not being able to utilize the knowledge acquired at the cost of so much effort on his part and of so much sacrifice on the part of those persons who, singly or collectively, have interested themselves in his education.

Certain friends of the blind, certain institutions, fully aware of this difficulty, have sought its remedy in the Asylum succeeding to the School. They have founded Asylums destined to receive the blind who have no relations able to keep them, and where they can utilize the knowledge they have acquired. This is a solution inspired by a good sentiment doubtless, but which is assuredly not the best. The National Institution has, on its part, organized a much wider plan. It has judged that the work is only complete when protection has been given to the blind without guardianship. He ought to be enabled, as much as possible, to gain his living without being shut up in an Asylum, which is more or less a barrack, but on the contrary to mix with the seeing, holding his little place, playing his little part in society. The National Institution, thoroughly convinced of this, has created the "Society for placing and assisting" the old pupils.

II .- History.

It is said that Valentin Haüy originated the idea of organizing a work of patronage for the purpose of taking care of the pupils who had left his school, but that the difficulties of all kinds stirred up by the Revolution prevented his realising this project.

As soon as the Institution, under the direction of Dr. Pignier. began to give a thorough and practical training to its pupils, it Dr. Pignier did undertook to find them a position in the world. much for the placing of organists; he obtained for many of his former pupils the situation of organist in several parishes of Paris. and in the cathedrals and churches of the provinces. All this he did himself, for there was no work of patronage, so-called, then in existence. But Dr. Pignier, who regarded himself not only as the director but also as the father of the blind children entrusted to him, held that, if when a pupil quitted the school the work of the director was completed, that of the father was not, and with the assistance of his sister, Mademoiselle Pignier, and that of his blind under-teachers, he sought to provide the outgoing pupils with some occupation. His private purse was, no doubt, often drawn upon for his good works; since if to do good requires more especially a warm heart, we know that it also requires money.

Monsieur Dufau (1) in 1841 organized a society called "The National Society for the protection of the blind of France." The idea was generous, but this attempt was premature, in that it extended to a great number of individuals who had not received any instruction, and for whom it was necessary to be at considerable expense in order to endow them with a trade. After a trial of several years Monsieur Dufau was led to create the private Society of the Institution (1849), whose work was restricted but most efficacious.

Monsieur Sion, a blind professor, seconded Monsieur Dufau with an intelligence and devotion above all praise. Re-organised in 1855, this Society was recognized by the Government to be of public utility in 1866.

Ten years after its foundation (December 31st, 1858) the Society possessed a capital of 15,400 francs; the subscriptions of the blind members did not amount to 700 francs. After its twentieth year of existence its capital rose to nearly 84,000 francs: the subscriptions of the blind members exceeded goo francs. Another period of ten years elapsed and its capital was 128,000 francs; the subscriptions of members of the Society exceeded 1200 francs. And later, on the 31st December, 1888, the capital of the Society amounted to nearly 157,000 francs. Finally, on the 31st December, 1889, its capital was 166,565 francs.

It seldom happens that a work takes a definite form at its commencement; one has nearly always to grope a little, especially when there is no type to imitate; for the Society for placing and

⁽¹⁾ The following lines are borrowed from the "Moral and Financial Report" for the year 1888, sent in by Monsieur Berners, at the Twenty-sixth General Assembly of the Society.

assisting, which may now serve as a model for similar institutions was organized at a time when there was nothing to serve as a guide.

A similar Society was created in Saxony, about the year 1836, when the international communications between establishments for the blind were not very frequent. In speaking of those schools which granted a solid and regular patronage to their former pupils, the system is often called "the Saxon system." That which precedes, and above all that which follows will show that one may just as well say "the system of the National Institution for the youthful blind of Paris."

III .- Aim and Organization.

By the terms of its Statutes the Society for placing and assisting has for its aim to occupy itself with the physical and moral future of the old pupils of the National Institution, to secure their being started in business, and to give them in all conditions and at all periods of their life a permanent protection and patronage; but this assistance is granted on one condition, viz., good conduct, and work in proportion to the powers and means of the blind.

The Society is composed of two kinds of members, the participating members and the honorary members. All the blind, whether present or former pupils of the National Institution, if admitted by the Council of Administration of the Society, can become participating members, that is to say, they can benefit by all the advantages which the Society offers. Any one can become an honorary member. All the members undertake to pay in annually a subscription, whose minimum is three francs for a participating member, and five francs for an honorary member. The number of members is not limited, neither is there any restriction as to age or sex. Every participating member who, after a notice to pay his subscription, shall have allowed a year to pass without doing so, shall be erased by the Council from the list of the members of the Society. Nevertheless he can regain his position as a member by paying the arrears of his subscriptions from the day they became due. Exclusion from the Society may be pronounced against any member who has undergone a correctional or criminal sentence, who takes to begging, who leads an openly vicious life, who has not made a proper use of the assistance granted by the Society, or who has wilfully done injury to the Association.

The Society is governed by a Council of Administration, consisting of sixteen members, of whom at least eight must be blind. The Council makes up its numbers from among the participating or honorary members of the Society, and a third of its members are changed every year. All its functions are entirely

gratuitous. The Director of the Institution is by right a member of the Council, of which four members must be chosen from among those persons who belong to the young women's quarter of the Institution, and four members from the persons belonging to the young men's quarter; so that nine members of the Council must belong to the Institution. Each year the Council chooses from among its members a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a "Délégué" (whose business it is to correspond with and find places for the old pupils). The retiring members can be re-elected. A permanent Commission, composed of at least three members, and chosen by the Council, is specially occupied with all that concerns the starting in business of the pupils. A Committee of Lady Patronesses assist the Council in making the Society known and in raising funds, in starting pupils in business, in taking the measures necessary to find employment and to form a connection for them, &c.

The Lady Patronesses can be present at the sittings of the Council, and have a consulting vote. Each year all the participating and honorary members are convoked in a General Assembly, when the Council renders an account of its administration and of the moral and financial condition of the Society. The Report of this General Assembly is printed and sent to all the members, as well as to those public bodies on whom the Society depends for assistance, or who grant it any subsidies.

Before we explain the working of our Society, it may, perhaps, be advisable to draw attention to some particularly interesting details of its organization.

In the first place, it is evident that in the mind of the founders the blind are not considered as beings who are always under age, always incapable of acting for themselves, and whose affairs must always be managed for them and independently of them. In many Societies of Patronage, lately instituted in various countries, we see that not only are the blind unrepresented in the Council of Administration, but that they do not even form part of the Society. These, therefore, are simply philanthropic Societies which interest themselves in the blind and among whose administrators a blind person might happen to slip in by chance, but where the blind have no place marked out for them beforehand in the Statutes.

These societies seem to say to the blind, "You are poor, you are unfortunate, we the seeing pity you, we unite in order to help you; we are going to be your benefactors, and we shall be good enough to interest ourselves on your behalf." I fully recognize that this is good and humane as far as it goes, but the founders of our Society have placed themselves, it seems to me, on a higher and better ground. These founders consisted of blind as well as

of seeing men, and they came to the following conclusion "The blind who go out under advantageous circumstances from a special and thorough school, such as the National Institution, are really able to gain their living by their work. Only, they have had more difficulties to contend with than many of the seeing, and a certain number of obstacles inherent to blindness, over which it is sometimes difficult or even impossible to triumph in isolation."

"This, then, is what must be done: let us, whether present or former pupils of the National Institution, or seeing friends of the blind, unite; let us form an association for placing and assisting, designed for old pupils: every one shall pay us a subscription, small enough to be no burden, but which will take from the assistance the character of being entirely gratuitous alms. A blind person who may ask for help will have some right to it, since by participation, possibly very small, but still participation, he will have contributed to the formation of the funds of the Society. Then, in order that the Council of Administration should always keep in view the truest interests of the blind, half, at least, of its members must be taken from among the blind."

Now, I ask, are not these sentiments much higher than those which inspired the creation of Societies of Patronage in favour of the blind, in which the blind themselves take no part? The Society being founded solely for the old pupils of the National Institution, it was necessary to provide that the Council should never deviate from its object, and that it should be thoroughly well acquainted as to the capabilities and the moral and professional worth of the blind whom they were to protect.

This is the reason that a fourth part of the Council must belong to the girls' quarter, and a fourth part to the boys' quarter, there then will remain, therefore, the other half of the members of the Council, who can be chosen from among persons interested in the blind and bringing an outside element into the Institution.

Lastly, the Director of the Institution is by right a member of the Council. Since the foundation of the Society he has always been elected as its President.

This is a very wise arrangement, for it is very important that the Director of the Institution should interest himself in the placing out and in the future of the pupils of the School which he directs; but should there be anyone more devoted to the work of the Society than the Director, the power of electing him as President has been reserved.

We must however observe that at the present time there is no temptation to break through the tradition which makes the Director of the National Institution the President of the Society for placing and assisting; for all those who know our Society also know that in Monsieur Emile Martin, Director of the National Institution since 1883, his deep interest in the blind is only equalled by his conscientious performance of his official duties, and that all his time is divided between the care which he gives to the establishment he directs, and the multifarious occupations connected with his presidency over the "Society for placing and assisting."

IV .- The Working of the Society.

In order to set about starting a pupil in business the Society does not wait until the day when that pupil quits the school; for a year or two before the completion of his studies it has been watching him, enquiries have been made as to his capabilities, his moral and professional worth, the situation and resources of his family, the kind of protectors which he has, and the help he may expect from them.

This is no slight work, for each year on an average fifteen young men and eight young women leave the Institution, after having completed their full course of study. Their capabilities are by no means alike; there are the male and female handicraft workers, good or mediocre, tuners who are not much more than workmen, and tuners who are musicians; among these tuners it is necessary to distinguish between those who are particularly skilful and who can undertake difficult repairs, and those whose skill, being ordinary, must limit themselves to slight repairs; those who have good introductions, a good address, and are likely to form a private connection must be distinguished from those who, without good address and without introductions, have only a chance of succeeding in a pianoforte factory or where there is an already established connection.

Among the musicians there are the good and the mediocre, those who are better fitted to succeed as organists than as teachers, those who are willing to live in an establishment and those, on the contrary, to whom independence is necessary, &c.—and this applies equally to the young men and to the young women.

The "Lady Patronesses" seek situations, employment, orders, or clients for the pupils leaving the School; and this they do by a very active and extensive correspondence, by taking every opportunity to keep up old connections or to form new ones with possible employers of the male or female blind workpeople among manufacturers or dealers in pianos, with the clergy, with orphanages, charitable institutions, educational establishments, and with the members of the Council of Administration. If the blind person can make use of his family as a starting-point, and if he has any chance of exercising his calling in the town or in the district inhabited by his parents, the "Lady Patronesses" send him there, helping him with money, if necessary, for the first

expenses which have to be incurred in making himself known, for his removal, or for the purchase of tools or instruments necessary for the exercise of his calling. If, on the contrary, he cannot reckon on his family, either because of its moral or material situation, or because the district inhabited by it offers no prospect for exercising his calling, then they seek to provide the blind person with some employment or they send him to a fresh locality where he has a chance of success.

It will be understood that all this requires much fresh ground to be broken, also great activity; but success can only be gained at this price.

The pecuniary assistance granted to the pupils, who are leaving, varies much, there is no sum fixed beforehand. The Council decide, after making minute investigations, what the necessary sum shall be. To a workman who wears a blouse, and whose tools, including the first outlay, are not costly, a gift of fifty francs is worth more than 300 francs would be to a tuner, who is also a musician. For the latter must be well dressed in order to appear among his clients: he requires a complete set of tuning implements (costing about ninety francs), a piano on hire (fifteen francs per month), and a suitable abode in the town where he is going as organist and teacher of music.

But this expense is certainly not too great if, after this sacrifice, the blind person succeeds in obtaining a situation of from 1800 to 3000 francs, as many of the blind musicians do.

The girls cost less than the young men, the situations they are about to occupy being already made. They are placed, for example, as organists or teachers of music in a school; or as organists in a charitable institution; that which is most necessary for them is to pay their journey and to give them a sufficiently complete outfit, the whole generally estimated at 300 francs. In reference to this, it may be mentioned that the Institution gives to every out-going pupil a small trousseau, but not a complete outfit.

The female workers, like the workmen, have less expenses than the male or female musicians. Once started, the Council does not lose its interest in the pupil, but, as much as possible, continues to watch over the whole of his career. Each old pupil has his own file of papers, in which are classified, as they come in, all the documents relating to his moral and material condition; note is taken of all the subscriptions to the fund which are made by him, and of all the assistance which has been granted to him, either in money or in kind. The decisions of the Council are also noted down, so that in an instant on taking the file of an old pupil one can trace the different phases of his existence.

Requests for assistance are addressed to one of the members of the Council, nearly always to the President (they are generally written in Braille). The reasons for the requests must be given in detail, and backed up by letters from influential persons, or still better by a personal recommendation from one of the members of the Council who has long been intimate either with the old pupil or with those who employ him and are in close contact with him. Still, the desire to be thoroughly informed as to the true position of the applicant must be combined with great discretion. for often it would compromise the situation of an organist, or of a teacher of music, to allow it to be known in his locality that he is in want, that his situation is more precarious than it appears to be, and that it is by an act of beneficence that he is suitably clothed, &c., or still more, that the Society has some distrust as to his conduct. The enquiries, therefore, are always made with extreme caution, which does not a little tend to increase the difficulty of the task of the Council of Administration. All assistance voted by the Council is immediately dated by the Secretary, signed by the President, and paid by the Treasurer. If the old pupil lives in Paris or its environs, he is requested to come and fetch the money himself, and advantage is taken of this opportunity to have a conversation with him. Sometimes one of the members of the Council takes it to him. If he lives in the provinces the money is sent to him through the post.

Applications for assistance generally arise from the following causes: illness, stoppage of work, journeys to be made in order to increase or to begin a connection, renewal or purchase of an instrument. For the blind who are married, the birth of a child, the illness of the wife or children, often cause a request for assistance.

The blind girls, once placed out, generally cost less than the young men. The reason for this is simple. The position of the women is humble, but it is stable, for it depends on the establishment which houses, feeds and pays them, and unless the establishment undergoes a change (which very rarely happens) they may remain there for many years without requiring help. The position of the men, though doubtless much more lucrative, is subject to all the fluctuations of the increase or decrease of a connection. They often suffer severely from the shock of commercial and financial crises. Also many blind men marry. After marriage the expenses are heavier, therefore, the bachelors require less than the fathers of families.

Donations from fifty to 150 francs are the most numerous, it is seldom that they exceed 300 francs, or that less than twenty francs are given. When the position of the blind person is good, and the crisis causing the request for help appears to be quite accidental, the gift is transformed into a loan, without interest, to

be repaid in small sums within a given time; sometimes part of of the sum required is granted as a gift, and the rest as a loan. Often also an assistance of 100 francs is granted under the form of a monthly allowance of twenty or twenty-five francs, covering a period of four or five months.

By this it will be seen that there is great elasticity in the manner of according help. The greatest amount of material and moral good is sought to be conferred on the recipients at the least possible expense. The constant observance of this method has made it possible to render very great and numerous services to the former pupils of the Institution.

The Council assembles regularly on the first Tuesday of every month at eight o'clock in the evening, in the National Institution. The members never absent themselves from these meetings except for important reasons. There they discuss all matters relative to the placing and patronage of former pupils, they examine the requests for help, also the means for helping the blind person: o extend his connection, for another to obtain an increase of salary from his employers, or from the church of which he is organist, &c.

After the questions of patronage come those of administration of investment of funds, of receiving legacies, and of steps to be taken in order to take possession of a donation or legacy, &c.

Besides the monthly meetings, prescribed by the Statute, the Council can assemble during the course of the month, if necessary. The President can convoke it on his own authority, or at the request of three members. Each year, when appointing its officers, the Council nominates a permanent Commission, whose duty it is to act at once if an opportunity offers for providing a situation for a pupil which might be lost through delay. The measures adopted and the supplies voted by the special Commission must always be submitted to the Council for ratification.

A certain number of the members of the Council undertake to correspond with the blind. They endeavour to make as many as possible benefit by these letters, so valuable to the blind, especially to those who are single, far from their families, or deprived of near relations or friends to whom they can confide their troubles or sorrows.

The old pupils who reside in Paris or its suburbs, or on the line of route which the members of the Council may take when going for their holidays, are visited as frequently as possible. It is obvious how important these visits are, they are the means of precisely ascertaining what kind of position the educated blind hold in the world, what are their wants and aspirations. It is thus possible to look into and touch, as it were, the difficulties against which the blind stumble in life, and knowing these difficulties experimentally it is often practicable, in concert with those

who have the direction of the school, to hit upon a remedy, by some modification in training or education.

It must here be mentioned that in this mission of visitors and correspondents with the old pupils, the members of the Council have the assistance of a certain number of extremely intelligent and zealous members of the Society.

Many of the Professors in the Institution, not content with their devoted labours in teaching and educating the blind, employ their leisure in visiting their former pupils, in corresponding with them, and thus continue to do them good.

In other schools for the blind, which have also an organization of patronage, it is generally the Director himself who, during the holidays, goes to visit the old pupils. This is an excellent plan, but it must be remarked in the first place that not one of these establishments is as old or as extensive as the National Institution, which has more than 240 pupils. The old pupils of the Institution are, therefore, legion in number; moreover, they are not, as is nearly always the case in the foreign establishments above mentioned, scattered over a circumscribed territory. The old pupils of the Institution are dispersed all over France, and if one individual had to visit and correspond with all of them, he would have to give up the whole of his time to this mission.

V.-Results.

Now that the history, aim, organization, and working of the Society for placing and assisting are known, it will be useful to glance over the results attained by this work.

At the present time the Society numbers 343 participating members, 322 honorary members, and 76 perpetual members (1).

It possesses a capital of 166,565 francs. Its annual income amounts to about 20,000 francs, derived from its members, from the interest of its capital, from collections, concerts, &c., which are annually organized, and which bring in nearly always the same amount. Its expenses are about 14,000 francs. It therefore increases its capital each year by about 6,000 francs. Since its organization the Society has made grants of about 151,000 francs, and loans to the amount of about 9,000 francs.

If we now take the figures given in the Reports for the last three years 1887, 1888, 1889, we shall see that the average annual number of old pupils assisted has been forty-six men and twelve women.

The forty-six men have received 4,470 francs, the twelve women 1,452 francs, which gives an average of ninety-seven francs to each of the men and of 121 francs to each woman.

(r) The perpetual members are those who having paid in a sum of 100 francs are exempt from annual subscriptions.

It is well to remember that the average annual number of pupils leaving the Institution is eight girls and fifteen young men. It will therefore be seen that out of the great number of blind persons who, since 1841, have passed through the National Institution there are very many who do not require assistance; and for many it has been sufficient to start them, provide them with tools, and they have then made their way in life, only applying to the Society in cases of extremity which are happily rare.

But if, thank God, all the old pupils of the Institution have not been obliged to seek help from our treasury, there are those to whom it has been salvation. How many I could name who have left the Institution thoroughly well qualified for their work, but who, being orphans, or belonging to a family unable to support them while waiting for a situation, would have been reduced to beggary, to vagrancy, or to be immured in an alms-house, if the "Society for placing and assisting" had not supported them while seeking to obtain them employment, if it had not started them, clothed them, furnished them with tools, with books, with instruments, &c. How many others, in consequence of a long illness, or of a prolonged cessation of work, or again through loss of their situation through no fault of their own would have been reduced to the last extremity had it not been for the help of the Society? Or again, for those who are able to maintain themselves, what moral force is given by the knowledge that should an accident some day bring them into difficulties, they will be powerfully supported, and that, thanks to the moral and material protection of the "Society for placing and assisting," they will never fall into hopeless misery. Freed from this uneasiness, they work with more courage and success.

Since 1856 the Society has been endeavouring to establish a workshop with board, for those old pupils engaged in handicraft trades who were unable to carry on their work at home. But not having been able to find a man well versed in industrial and commercial business, a great accumulation of stock took place, the raw material was not bought in at a sufficiently low price, and the result was that the stock had to be disposed of at a great loss, and the deficit increasing, the workshop was closed.

In 1886, and for the *female* workers this time, the Council of the Society decided on organizing a workshop with board. It was set up in Illiers near Chartres (three hours from Paris), in an unfurnished building gratuitously offered to the Society by the Clogenson family. About fifteen workwomen are there comfortably installed, under the superintendence of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, who are themselves members of the "Society for placing and assisting."

The whole amount resulting from the sale of her work is given to each workwoman, and she has to pay in half of it to

the Treasury of the Society. The workwoman is provided with lodging, food, and washing, at the expense of the Society, but she must pay for her own clothes. This house is a place for work with board, but not an asylum, therefore only the skilled and industrious workwomen are admitted and kept. The daily earnings of each must at least amount to fifty centimes. They make fishing nets, fancy nets, articles in crochet and knitting, while other trades are being tried.

Another result, and by no means one of the least important, of those gained by the "Society for placing and assisting;" is that of the beneficial influence it has had upon the methods of training employed in the National Institution.

The patronage of the old pupils of a school, a patronage partly exercised by the very persons who direct this school and are its instructors, is an excellent touchstone, bringing to light its advantages and defects.

Those schools which, without losing all interest in the fate of their former pupils, do not, however, constantly watch over their interests, because they are not pledged to do so by an organization similar to that of the "Society for placing and assisting," run great risk of their method of training degenerating into Charlatanism. They are fatally tempted to attach too much importance to those things which only serve to excite the admiration of visitors, but which are sterile as to the future of the pupils.

Whereas in the National Institution whenever a new Director has been inclined to introduce into the School programmes any brilliant but useless subject, only flattering to the self-love of the Masters and of the Administration, he has always been recalled to a sense of the true requirements of the case. The observation of facts, which he necessarily has under his eyes, as president, or even as a member only of the Council of Administration of the "Society for placing and assisting," will soon destroy all his illusions.

Incessant contact with facts cannot fail also to have a great and excellent influence over the kind of education which is given in a school. Friends of the blind are met with who say "We must bring up the blind girls with a view to marriage, we must prepare them to become good mothers of families." Well, these friends of the blind have not been instructed by the experience which a work of placing and assisting gives. They would have known as the National Institution knows, that if, for a blind man, marriage with one who has sight, contracted under reasonable conditions, may be a happy thing, it is not at all the same for a blind woman, who is generally unhappy in her household; from which arises the conclusion that it is much wiser to bring up the blind girls in the thought that they ought—not from selfishness,

but from prudence—to refrain from thinking of marriage, and to forego the joys and also the burdens of a family.

VI.—Conclusion.

All works of charity are, no doubt, admirable; but it must be remembered that, from a social point of view, the greater number of them can only be palliatives, necessitated by disorganization of the family. In a state of society where the family is what it should be, the individual would find the moral and material help required; but which, in our days, he is obliged to seek in benevolent organizations which are, after all, artificial means.

A Society for aiding blind workers, like the "Society for aiding and assisting," is, and ever will be, indispensable.

In any country whatever, and however well the family may be organized, it cannot always do what is essential towards finding employment suited to a blind son or daughter, because this employment will very often be beyond its sphere. And also, if for children with sight it is wisest, in deciding what profession they shall follow, to take into account their capabilities and tastes, how much more necessary does this become for the blind, who have, over and above the difficulties to be found in every profession, those produced by blindness.

In schools devoid of "patronage" they are ready enough to say: "We cannot teach tuning to such or such a pupil, because in the place where his family dwell there are no pianos to tune."

This may be, but often also in that locality there are no organs to be played, no lessons of music to be given, and then this child, who, perhaps, had the capabilities necessary to make a good musician, will become a mender of chairs, and will probably never be more than a second-rate workman, because he will learn and practise this trade with distaste, feeling that he is capable of better work. Besides, are you sure that he will find in the village or perhaps the isolated farm where his family dwell, chairs enough to mend sufficient to employ him for 365 days in the year? That is Utopianism.

Again, it is Utopianism to believe that the family of the blind person can find him employment; it is only by mere accident that this happens.

In fact, to convince a maker of pianos, a clergyman, or any employer, of the intrinsic value of the work of the blind, to answer objections, to obtain a sufficient salary, powers and fertility are required, which neither the parents of the blind nor the blind person himself can be expected to possess, inexperienced as the latter must be on just leaving school.

Without doubt it is well, all things considered, to give a blind person some trade which will harmonize with the social position of his family, but very little assuredly can be expected from the family itself in supporting and placing the blind. The results of experience in this matter entirely corroborate the conclusions arrived at by reasoning.

Lastly, a Director of a School will never conduct the establishment over which he presides, with a true knowledge of cause and effect, unless he closely studies the results produced by this establishment.

Fontenelle said, in speaking of Vauban: "He carefully enquired into the value of the lands; what they yielded; the manner in which they were cultivated; the faculties of the peasants, their ordinary food and of what it consisted, the amount they could gain in a day by their work; details apparently trifling and unimportant, but which belong, revertheless, to the grand art of governing." Fontenelle was right, for theory is not worth much unless it is subjected to verification by facts, and it is by "patronage" that the schools for the blind can accurately estimate the value of the results which they obtain.

The care which the National Institution of Paris has always taken of its old pupils, especially since the establishment, fifty years ago, of the Society of Patronage (now become the "Society for placing and assisting" which we have just been studying) has, I am sure, much contributed to maintain this Institution in the high position which it occupies among the establishments devoted to the education of the blind.

MADAME VERD informed the Conference what admirable work was being done by the "Société de Placement et de Secours," and how energetically M. de la Sizeranne was working in France on behalf of the blind.

DR. ARMITAGE: The great majority of the pupils in the Paris institution receive a musical training. They come from all parts of France, and, as a rule, are not selected from other schools; but represent the average talent to be found in the blind. As their education proceeds, the few who cannot be trained as musicians are set to handicraft trades, the others develope into good, indifferent, and bad musicians. The good invariably succeed as organists, tuners or teachers. The indifferent would mostly fail if it were not for the Society finding places for them, and assisting them in other ways; but with this assistance they generally succeed. The bad, of course, fail, but their number is small, as they have been eliminated during the progress of their education. It will probably interest the Conference to know that it was the knowledge of the wonderful success, as musicians, of the pupils.

of the Paris school, when compared with the thoroughly bad results obtained in England, that induced me, some twentythree years ago, to start a superior school, and in 1871, the right man appeared in the person of Dr. Campbell to organise it. The blind owe a deep debt of gratitude to France, asthe three great steps in advance in the education of the blind were all made in the Paris Institution, of which we have so many worthy representatives among us to-day. Valentin Haiiv who, towards the end of the last century, was the pioneer of the Education of the Blind. It was Louis Braille, who from 1829 to 1834, elaborated his admirable system, which is now used almost throughout the whole civilised world, and which has contributed more than anything else to the improvement of the Education of the Blind; and, again, it was Louis Braille, Claude Montal, and other blind professors of the Paris School, who proved that when a suitable musical education has been given the blind are perfectly able to enter into competition with the seeing.

MR. HALL: In reference to visiting the blind after leaving the institutions, I think it a very important point that such an organisation should be established, as it would be greatly to the benefit of pupils who have left; but the difficulty is in finding funds for that purpose. Correspondence is easy; but periodical visits would entail considerable expense.

Mr. R. Tair also spoke with reference to the paper, and emphasized the importance of the schools keeping touch with, and assisting, the old pupils.

It was moved by Dr. Campbell, that the paper be adopted and printed in the Report of the proceedings of the Conference, and that the best thanks of the Conference be given to M. de la Sizeranne.

This was seconded by Mr. Hall, and carried.

The Chairman then called on Miss Moon to read Dr. Moon's paper on

HOME TEACHING AND FREE LIBRARIES FOR THE BLIND.

In compliance with the request that I should prepare a paper on the subject of Home Teaching for the Blind, I have, with much pleasure, given the following brief sketch of the origin and success of Home Teaching and Free Libraries for their use:—

In recent times many of the blind, who have enjoyed the modern improved methods of instruction, have, by their perse-

verance, risen to eminence and distinction. In former days, before the embossed type and various educational appliances were introduced, not a few of the blind became distinguished: but, doubtless, they would have accomplished far more than they did accomplish if they had possessed the advantages of the present day. All honour and praise are due to the philanthropists, who adorned the concluding years of the eighteenth, and the earlier years of the present century, for their untiring devotion to the cause of the blind. They heralded a brighter and more cheering era for those deprived of sight, and the seed first sown by them has yielded a golden harvest which has not yet been fully reaped. Many noble monuments of their zeal, scattered throughout our own and other countries, abundantly testify that their labours were not in vain, and although each succeeding decade has chronicled some improvement or advance, it behoves us neither to ignore nor underrate the earlier efforts of the pioneers.

Among the various plans suggested from time to time for the promotion of the intellectual and spiritual welfare of the blind, perhaps none have been more successful in meeting the requirements of this afflicted class than "Home Teaching," and the establishment of "Free Lending Libraries of Embossed Books."

The number of blind in England and Scotland averages about one in every 1,000 of the general population, and of these blind, not more than one in ten are under fifteen years of age. Hence, it will readily be seen that the great proportion are adults, and by reference to the Census, it will be found that four-fifths of the blind are over thirty years of age.

Previously to 1856, attention had been chiefly directed to the instruction of the "juvenile blind," collected into schools, while the teaching of the "adult blind," who form by far the larger number, many of whom were plunged suddenly into permanent darkness in maturer life, had been almost overlooked. To establish schools for these multifarious sufferers would be impossible, even though schools were increased an hundred fold, by reason of disparity of ages, infirmities, states, and conditions, and an endless variety of other circumstances to which they are subject.

In certain countries of the East the numbers are much greater than in our own country, the proportion being two, and sometimes three in every 1,000, while in Egypt the number is still higher.

In the United States of America there are 65,000 blind, of whom 50,000 are adults over twenty years of age.



The plan of Home Teaching is both simple and inexpensive. A committee is formed and a teacher is appointed (who is usually blind), to search out and instruct all such as are willing to learn, and afterwards to exchange the books, weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, as opportunity affords or necessity requires.

A complete set of my embossed books, now numbering 518 volumes, is sufficient to supply a large number of readers by means of periodical circulation among them through the agency of teachers.

More than 3,000 of the blind of the United Kingdom die every year, and an equal number of persons become blind, so that the work of Home Teaching, and the use of Free Libraries will always be required. More than 300,000 of the blind of the entire world die every year. Great, then, is the necessity for Home Teaching to be established, as far as practicable, in all parts of the globe.

In 1855 an experiment was made in London, by sending a teacher (Wm. Cooper, a blind soldier), to the homes of the blind to instruct them in reading upon my type, and to lend them books from a free library, established for the purpose. The experiment was so successful, that another teacher was soon afterwards appointed, and gradually the number was increased to eighteen. Similar societies and libraries to the number of eighty, have since been formed in different parts of the United kingdom, and extended to several foreign countries.

From the Report of the London Society for 1889, we gather that during the year 49,878 visits were made by their teachers to the homes of 2,141 of the blind of the Metropolis and Suburbs; and 58,859 volumes were lent from the Society's Libraries. Altogether this Society has taught 5685 persons to read, and lent 1,069,103 volumes of my embossed books from their Free Libraries.

In Scotland the work has been equally successful. It was commenced by Mr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, in 1857, with twelve pupils.

The work rapidly spread, and now there are ten societies, employing twenty-one missionaries, with over 3,000 blind under their visitation, more than half of whom are readers of the embossed books.

In Australia, Home Teaching was commenced about 1870, by Mr. James, at Ballarat. It has since spread over that vast continent, and societies have been formed at Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Tasmania. Nearly all the missionaries are blind, and some of their

districts are very extensive, and it is wonderful how they get from place to place. For instance, Mr. Prescott, at Sydney, travels on an average not less than 10,000 miles, in the discharge of his duties, in the course of a year. For several years, Mr. Prescott had only his dog for his companion and guide. The same was the case, at the outset, with Mr. James, who has only one arm, and was an entire stranger to the country, having emigrated from Cornwall, where he had been taught to read by one of our home teachers, after becoming blind from an accident, in one of the mines.

Much might be said in reference to the labours of both Mr. James and Mr. Prescott, if time would admit. They are truly Christian men, and earnestly labour for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their fellow sufferers.

In the spring of 1882, I visited America, with my daughter, to see if we could get home teaching taken up by the friends of the blind in the United States. This, under God's blessing, led to the establishment of Home Teaching and Libraries for the Blind in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Pittsburg, and it is gratifying to find that the work is now prospering in the United States as it has done in Great Britain and other countries. Books are sent by mail from the library at Philadelphia into almost all the States, and, in time, we hope many other societies and libraries will beformed for carrying out this great and important work. Letters received from many of their readers are very gratifying and encouraging.

In France, Germany, and Sweden Home Teaching has also been tried with success, and the plan is now commenced in South India, in the Tamil language, where we hope for thesame promising results.

It is estimated that there are not less than 10,000 of the blind reading mv embossed books, and that at least 200,000 volumes are annually lent from the libraries. So great an intellectual boon, previously to establishing the Free Libraries, has never been conferred upon the blind, and probably never-could have been, had not a plain, simple and bold type, similar to my own, been invented for their use.

In conclusion, Home Teaching and Free Libraries havemany recommendations for their adoption.

First.—They are a necessity, because the adult blind are numerous, and often aged and poor, so that they cannot be brought together like the young, to institutions for instruction, and many require but one lesson before they are able to read for themselves.

Second.—The plan is so simple and easy, that persons of

only moderate education can be employed, and frequently the blind are engaged as teachers.

Third.—Persons having hands hardened by work and advanced in years, or with delicate and shattered nerves, can be taught to read the books when my type is used.

Fourth.—No costly buildings are required to assemble the blind in for instruction.

Fifth.—Although one tenth of the blind of the United Kingdom are annually removed by death as many more persons become blind, and need to be taught.

Sixth.—The number of young blind is every year becoming less, owing to the advance of science, and other causes. These children in time become adults, and will need the libraries.

These and many other reasons might be given to show the great necessity for Home Teaching and Free Libraries. Had it not been for this Mission, many thousands of the blind would have remained unnoticed and uncared for, whereas, now their wants are brought before the notice of the public, and assistance is rendered, either to help them to earn their own living, or in some other way provide for their necessities by means of benevolent funds, raised for the purpose.

There are not less than three millions of blind in the world. To search out and instruct this vast number there would be employment for 30,000 missionaries for twenty years, by which time there would have been a large number removed by death, and an equal number of persons become blind, so that Home Teaching and Free Libraries will always be required.

Mr. Brown spoke of the benefit derived from the Home Teaching, and read extracts from his "report of mission work among the blind in Edinburgh, etc.," which stated that "the home mission to the blind was started in Edinburgh, and began the work of visiting and teaching the blind to read in Dr. Moon's system, in their own homes and poorhouses in 1857, with twelve pupils and one teacher. Now, instead of twelve blind, there are 3,000; and instead of one teacher, there are twenty-one, besides ladies, who take a pleasure in visiting them, and helping in a variety of ways.

... Of the above 3,000 about 1,500 have been taught to read the embossed books, etc."

Mr. Niederhausern referred to the work being done in Northumberland and Durham, by the Home Teaching Society.

MR. PLATER: No one feels the value of Home Teaching more than I do, and for two reasons. One is, that reading

is a source of education and delight to the blind; the other, that it is such a beneficial opening for the employment of the blind. Now, the first reason I need not refer to fully, it speaks for itself. Secondly, I hear that there are twenty-one sighted teachers of the blind in Scotland, but no blind teachers. That twenty-one sighted persons should be employed as missionaries to, and teachers of, the blind, to read, is a surprise to me, and I say it is a cruel injustice to the blind that none of them are employed as teachers, or home missionaries to the blind; it is a work they are well able to do, and is successfully carried on by them in London, Birmingham, and many other parts of England. The funds are raised for the blind, and should be used in every way possible for their benefit. I believe I shall have the support of every Scotchman, as well as Englishmen in this room, to the Resolution I am about to move, viz.: "That this Conference urges upon all Home Teaching Societies the expediency of employing the blind, as teachers of the blind, it being a work for which they are eminently qualified."

I hope the Resolution will have the unanimous support of this Conference.

MR. MARTIN: I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of Mr. Plater, and I do so, Mr. Chairman, not from any want of respect I feel for our friends, the missionaries, in Scotland. In their special work I wish them God speed, and if they are the means of bringing a soul to the Saviour, I rejoice in it as much as they do; but if this work can be done by the blind as efficiently as by the sighted, I say there are plenty of places which the sighted can occupy. No man is more gratefully received than my friend Mr. Brown, as an expounder of the Scriptures, and I have no doubt that there is an excellent sphere for him as a missionary to the sighted. It has been stated, that this Society commenced in Edinburgh, under our esteemed friend, Mr. Brown, with twelve pupils and one teacher. I must certainly put this matter historically The Society did not commence under Mr. Brown, with twelve pupils; but with two blind teachers, under Mr. Burn-Murdock, as Secretary. The names of those teachers were Robert Kirk, and James Hardie. In stating this fact, I am perfectly aware, I may be positively contradicted, but I venture to do so. Those two men were connected with our own institution. I state this, not to discourage Mr. Brown, but to put the matter on a proper footing. Blind workers like very much to be read to. When their fingers get hard and they are poorly, they like to have friends come to them, and read to them the literature of the outer world. I should like to recognise, to some extent, the beautiful work being done in China by the blind. That these blind readers should be permitted to stand in the streets of China, and be allowed to read to others, without coming under the name of missionaries at all, is matter of great interest and congratulation.

Mr. Brown said that Mr. Martin was mistaken in saying that two blind men began the work of home teaching in Edinburgh, under Mr. Burn-Murdock, as he himself (Mr. Brown), was the first teacher.

Dr. Moon corroborated what Mr. Brown said, with regard to the starting of the home teaching in Edinburgh.

Dr. Armitage: I thoroughly endorse the remarks of the previous speakers, as to the desirability of employing the blind as missionaries to the blind. I can say this, because this is not a question of experiment, it is not a question of theory. The thing has been done on a large scale in London, and elsewhere, and might be thoroughly successful. The blind readers and visitors employed by the Home Teaching Society of London, I think are sixteen in number; but I am not quite sure about all of them being blind. I can speak with greater accuracy in regard to the Indigent Blind Visiting Society of London. Some twentyfive years ago, when I joined the Committee, I suggested that the blind should be employed as visitors, I met with the greatest opposition and discouragement from the other Members of the Committee. We have become wiser in time; our thirteen visitors are all blind; and, moreover, the Secretary of our Society is blind, and I do not think that any society has a better or more energetic Secretary. I do not think that any missionary society has a better set of missionaries than we have; therefore, there is no doubt whatever, that the blind are perfectly fitted for, and capable of being missionaries, and carrying the Word of God to their fellow sufferers, and experience has shown that the sympathy they have with them, and the friendly feeling that their fellow sufferers have towards them, more than counterbalances certain disadvantages which the blind have to contend with. Therefore, I should be very glad if it was made clear that the majority of the Conference are of opinion that the visitors to the blind, as a rule, should be blind themselves. It is not only an advantage to those whom they visit, but another outlet, and another occupation to the blind, which they very much stand in need of. What I have already said I think will be agreed to by most members of the Conference. But I wish, now, to enter upon a point which is open to a great deal of discussion. I have the greatest admiration for Home Teaching Societies, but I do not like in this latter half of the Nineteenth Century for these Home Teaching Societies to restrict themselves entirely to one system. My friend, Dr. Moon, has done most admirable work

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among the blind, and they are under a deep debt of gratitude for this, and we are delighted that their benefactor should himself be a blind man. At the time that Dr. Moon was introducing his system into all parts of the country, it was perfectly natural that the Home Teaching Societies should use his books, because the systems known at that time were not suitable for the average reader, therefore Dr. Moon had the field all to himself, and it was quite right that the society should adopt his system, because it was the best; but during the last twenty years, since the introduction of the Braille system into this country, things have completely changed. The Braille system is recognised as being the only system which is fit for the education of the young. It is, therefore, now used in every institution. But we are told that when the young grow up and become engaged in handicraft work, they cannot then use the Braille system. That is simply a mistake. Mr. Goodwin, of Manchester, in his evidence before the Royal Commission, said that after the pupils passed from the school to the workshop, they took out twelve books in Braille to one in Moon's system. When the Royal Commission visited workshops attached to institutions abroad, they repeatedly convinced themselves that blind basket and brush makers were perfectly capable of reading the Braille system. It is, therefore, a fallacy to suppose that men trained at school by the Braille system are obliged to leave it off. It is also a fallacy to say that the adult blind cannot learn it. There are about 400 in London attending the classes of the Indigent Blind Society, and about seventy-five per cent. of them read and write Braille. Then the amount of literature in Braille is infinitely greater than in any other system. The British and Foreign Blind Association has issued about 900 different works—partly in print, partly in MS. many of them ten to fifteen up to twenty volumes. There is no such literature for the blind in the world, and I think it is a great mistake for Home Teaching Societies to refuse the blind, whom they visit, the use of such books as these. Many Home Teaching Societies circulate both Moon and Braille indiscriminately, giving to each person they visit that most suited to them, and I think that all Home Teaching Societies should do the same.

Mr. Hall: I think it would be interesting to this meeting to know that the Home Teaching Society for the Blind sent a teacher into South Wales about twenty-five years ago, who visited Cardiff and Swansea, and consequently home visiting and teaching was established in these towns. In both places that visit was the means of institutions and workshops being established. Since then we have continued the home teaching at Swansea. The teacher is blind, and visits the blind in Swansea and the villages and towns surrounding. We have altogether about 150 blind who are visited in Swansea and the neighbourhood. I

would suggest that, if it were possible, each institution should have a missionary and teacher to visit the blind at their homes. There are many aged blind who are quite unable to work. We have on our books about forty who are between sixty-five and eighty years of age, and they are pleased to see a missionary and listen to his reading. Many of the old people have been taught to read. Those who become blind when at an advanced age, can more easily learn the Moon Type than Braille's; but I quite agree that for the young the Braille system is preferable to Moon's, especially because it can be written as well as read.

MR MACDONALD, of Glasgow: I wished to hear what our friends had to advise in regard to the work in which some of us are especially engaged, and I thought I would like to answer a question asked by Mr. Martin, as to the names of the two blind teachers in Scotland. Their names are James Black, and John Sutherland; these are the only two we have just now. I am extremely pleased by the remarks that have just been made on the employment of the blind as teachers, and I will convey to my Directors the views expressed on this subject. Personally, I am in favour of employing the blind as teachers in towns and cities. During the past twenty-five years, we have had two blind teachers, both of whom proved efficient workers. They were employed in the city, but I am not quite sure whether they would succeed in counties. It has been tried in Scotland and failed; but whether it was the fault of the man or not, I do not know. Then, with regard to reading, this has been referred to by some of the previous speakers. It is very true that many, perhaps most of the blind, prefer to have reading done for them; but, as we all know, the great majority of the blind are poor. They have not, therefore, the opportunity of having readers whenever they wish. Besides, we know that we take, at times, our Bibles, and other books that we read, and study them by ourselves. This we cannot get done by mere visitors. There are two points I would like to refer to—in the first place, as to this out-door work among the blind. In Scotland, very seldom do the blind report themselves to us; we have to seek them. Sometimes. notwithstanding all our care and energies, we miss a blind man, here and there, for one, two, or three years. They get shut up in their houses, and they are not seen in the streets, nor does any one know them, not even their next door neighbour. As an illustration of this, I may mention that some years ago, I went out to explore a part of the country not hitherto visited by any of our agents. I went to a town not twenty miles from Glasgow. and called upon a gentleman, who took an active interest in Christian work. I explained to him the object of my visit, and asked if he could give me the names of any blind persons. He reflected a moment, and then said "There is not a blind man in

the town." Well, I asked what the population might be, and he answered it was 12,000. I said, "Would you be surprised to hear there are twelve blind people here?" I went out, and in two-and-a-half hours I discovered nine blind persons, and, yet, those engaged in active Christian work in the district did not know one of them. Now, that is a specimen of our work; we have to seek them out, and sometimes find them in a very lonely and desolate condition. Just one word with regard to reading. The intellectual benefit and profit, and the spiritual blessing that is derived from the reading of these books provided for them is incalculable. We have found, not once, but many times, that the first stage in the process of rousing a man to exert himself is the effort to learn to read. Without reading, a man feels himself utterly desolate and helpless; but when he realises the fact, that he can read, that opens his eyes to another fact, that he can also learn to do other things. Let me give an example. Some years ago we found a man, seated in his house, in a mining district. He had evidently made up his mind that he was useless. He had a wife and family in very poor circumstances. Our missionary got him to put his fingers on the alphabet, and he began to read. In a short time he found something to do. The result of all this is, that for the past twelve years he has been a happy industrious man-a good Christian, taking his share of the active work of the congregation to which he belongs, and carrying on a successful business as a tea merchant in the same town. There was a fact. If he could learn to read, it proved to him, he could do something else, and that was the first step in that man's after success in life.

Mr. Willis: I did not know that Dr. Armitage would take his text from what I had in my mind to say. I am sure he will pardon me for saying this. Perhaps I should say who I am; I am one of the Missionaries referred to as employed by the Indigent Blind Visiting Society. I have had many years apprenticeship as a blind man, and therefore I claim to know something about them. During the fourteen years I have been visiting, I have come into contact with a great many blind persons, having constantly had about 100 under visitation. I am not against Home Teaching for the Blind, but with regard to the system I say that the Braille is the best, because you can have in it any book you like, while in Dr. Moon's you can have only the books he has embossed. I have books in my possession at home written by myself, and anyone can write and read in Braille type. I want to say just a word in regard to my visits among the blind. I find the greatest difficulty to move many of them outside their own street doors, even for a little walk, at least that is my experience in London, and I should be glad to know whether it is the same with workers in other parts. Our Society has in connection with

it classes scattered throughout London where the blind meet together. We are able to send to our circulating libraries for books which can be exchanged from time to time.

Mr. Illingworth: I am here for just a few moments. London is decidedly behindhand with regard to workshops, but I think from what we have heard this afternoon that London is to the front in its system of Home Teaching, inasmuch as this Society employs blind teachers, I may say exclusively. I wish blind teachers were employed in all places where there is a society of this kind, if, as has been proved in this Conference, that the blind are accepted as the best teachers of basket-making, and such like, and from experience I can say that the blind make splendid school teachers. The whole of my staff at the Edinburgh Institution are blind. With regard to types I may say I have had a good deal of experience in connection with our large library at West Craigmillar, and it has resulted in my finding that it is a mere fallacy to say that adults, or those whose hands are hardened by work, cannot read Braille. I knew a gentleman who was over seventy-five years of age who found no difficulty with Braille, and he read it fluently. For one volume in Moon's type, I say there are twenty taken out of the libraries in Braille by blind workmen.

The Rev. J. W. Farrow, of Ashton-under-Lyne: I rise to say that our Home Teaching Association employ a blind teacher. Aged pupils prefer books in the Moon type, but the young prefer the Braille type. The reader of the paper this afternoon referred to free lending libraries. We put ourselves in communication with the Committee of the free libraries of two of our townships, Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge, and said to them "Now look here, you have so many blind, what are you going to do for them?" This difficulty ended in each corporation supplying £20 worth of books in Moon's and Braille's types.

Mr. J. Townson also spoke with reference to the Home Teaching in the neighbourhood of Accrington.

Mr. W. Harris: I am pleased to bear my testimony to the benefits, the happiness and blessing conferred on the blind by the Home Teaching Societies. It is about twenty years since we first applied to Dr. Moon for advice and books in his type for the blind. Our work at Leicester is conducted by ladies, and we employ a Bible-woman under their direction. I am almost ashamed to state that the Bible-woman only receives about £35 a year, but we cannot afford to pay more. I will now tell you what we get for the money. The ladies and Bible-woman go to the homes of the blind. They also make arrangements for sending children to schools for the blind, and sometimes even visit them at school. They manage a library of books for the blind. They look after the sick and get them into our Infirmary, and sometimes also

arrange visits for them to the country when funds are provided. They write letters for the blind and read their letters to them. This indicates the confidence of the blind in the ladies and the Bible-woman. They apply for, and sometimes succeed in getting, pensions for the blind. They conduct a cottage Home where four aged blind women live under the care of a woman of their own position in life. I need scarcely say that this woman and also the Bible-woman can see. The ladies and Bible-woman have Bible readings at our Institution, and also from time to time have similar meetings in cottages at different parts of our town.

Dr. Campbell: In this work, in the country, our experience has been that cycles are a great success. One of our old pupils found that there was not sufficient work in his own village, and the neighbouring villages were too far away to be reached by walking, he secured a tandem, engaged a boy, and now has work over the greater part of his county.

Mr. Pine: When I sent up my name it was with the intention of seconding the motion of my friend, Mr. Plater, with which I cordially agree. I feel sure that in this particular work we cannot do better than have blind teachers, and I am particularly sorry to learn that there are as many as nineteen out of twenty-one in Scotland that are sighted. From what we have heard this afternoon it seems quite apparent that the blind can do this work quite as well if not better than the sighted. I am also of opinion that in this Home Teaching lies a partial solution of what many of us know is such a sore difficulty in many of our institutions, I mean that of finding openings for our girls. While our blind males can do more in the way of trades I believe our blind young women could do excellent work in this way, and that it would be particularly adapted for them. Doubtless many of the young ladies of this College could well undertake these positions, and after the excellent intellectual training they have received, the influence they could exert in looking after and teaching the blind would be unquestionable. Well, then, I should like to say one word with regard to Free Libraries. A speaker from Cheshire mentioned this question, and I am glad to tell him that in Nottingham we have succeeded in getting a very good library in connection with our Corporation Free Library, and we have a good supply of books both in Braille and Moon's system. Any blind person can become a member of the library by having a form filled up by a ratepayer in precisely the same way as an ordinary member. Many of our boys and girls in the Institution at Nottingham are individual members, besides other blind persons in the town, and I believe the library is much appreciated. Only recently some of our pupils said to me "We cannot become members because the rule prohibits persons from joining until they are fourteen years of age." However, on explaining this to the Librarian, he

said: "If you fill up the forms, all your blind people, no matter what their age, may enter, we wont refuse them." I have much pleasure in supporting the Resolution.

CANON NELIGAN: I should be glad if we could consider the subject how to prevent blindness. I only wish that all the institutions in the United Kingdom could have a copy of a Report on the subject, and I believe it would open their eyes very much. You will excuse the expression.

Miss Scott informed the Conference that she had found from experience that in the East end of London the finding out of blind children could be better done by blind than by seeing teachers, and that the fact of the teachers being blind enlisted the sympathy of the poorer classes and thereby it was easier to approach the parents.

Mr. James Ewing endorsed what Miss Scott had said, and stated that he knew a number of blind travelling over the country for even forty or fifty miles without a guide, and that he had much pleasure in supporting the Resolution.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME, of Blackburn: I had no intention of speaking, but this little matter I wish to mention. We have a blind man at Blackburn who has done a very great amount of good as a missionary, and the clergy in all the parishes, and the ministers of all denominations admit that he can get into places where they cannot get a footing; but the point I wish to draw your attention to is this, that whilst we have a free library we do not let it go unused. The missionary takes to the blind such books as they require: he acts as a kind of colporteur to the library, and to this he owes the great success of his work. So that shows that if the blind can have the books brought them they will read.

The Resolution moved by Mr. Plater and seconded by Mr. Martin was put from the chair and carried.

After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, on the motion of Mr. Hall, had been passed, the Conference adjourned until Friday morning.

In the evening, after tea had been kindly provided by the Members of the Committee of the Royal Normal College, Mr. Banister read the following paper; and a short Concert, which was much appreciated, was given by the Pupils of the College. Mr. Symes, from Paris, likewise played a violin solo, accompanied by Professor Guilbeau, also of Paris, which was much enjoyed.

SIR G. A. MACFARREN.

A paper read before the Conference of the Blind and their friends, at the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for

the Blind, Upper Norwood, July, 1890, by Henry C. Banister, Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint, and of the Pianoforte, in that College, and the Royal Academy of Music, and the Guildhall School of Music.

Were I addressing an audience composed mainly of musicians, I should have little difficulty in kindling and maintaining interest. while expatiating upon the career of Sir George Alexander Macfarren; their interest would be in the accomplished musician, irrespective of his blindness. But with my present audience, I have to deal with the interest attaching to Macfarren's achievements as a blind man, primarily; not, of course, irrespective of his musicianship, but in conjunction therewith. Those who have read such books as "The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties," or Dr. Smiles's "Self-help," must have felt that they were fascinated by the presentation therein, of what might not inappropriately be termed "The Romance of Perseverance." I do not know whether it would be considered incongruous to say, that Macfarren's career almost invests blindness itself with the element of romance. If, by romantic, we mean attractively improbable, then, indeed, the term would appropriately characterise his life and work.

Judging before the event, that which was accomplished by him would have been pronounced well-nigh impossible. My endeavour must be to make plain to you that the unique marvellousness of his mental activities, consists largely in their having been exercised in the domain of the beautiful art of music. And in saying this, I am not at all unmindful of the splendid records concerning the careers and achievements of Nicholas Saunderson, and Henry Fawcett, and, I might well add, Francis Joseph Campbell; but, mindful of these, I still hope to make good my contention that the achievements of Macfarren were unique—stand quite alone.

The earlier part of Macfarren's life may be lightly sketched by me, having little bearing upon our special concernment; the total relinquishment of the use of his eyes not having become compulsory till he was about forty years of age, or a little over, though his sight had been increasingly defective from boyhood, when he had to write home from school for a large print Testament. His blindness was hereditary—his father, George Macfarren, dancing master, dramatic author and manager, having been subject to an affection of the eyes, and totally blind during a portion of his life, though he recovered his sight a year or two before his death, in 1843.

The subject of my paper was born March 2nd, 1813, was sent first to a school at Ealing, was taken away therefrom for optical treatment, which did not benefit his sight, but nearly

destroyed his life. He was then placed, as much for his health as for his education, at a school at Lancing. On his return home, manifesting a predilection for music-a more happy hereditament from his father, from whom he received some musical instruction, as well as from Charles Lucas—he was ultimately entered as a student at the Royal Academy of Music. in 1829, when sixteen years of age, remaining there until 1836. It might have been supposed that, with defective sight, his attention would have been specially directed to the executive in his art, in which memory would largely avail; but though he practised the pianoforte as his principal instrument, and (mirabile dictu!) the trombone as a second study—the very instrument that distances its performer from the music which he has to read—he seems never to have been highly successful as an executant, though all that he did was done industriously, and with a will. He devoted his attention specially to the study of theory and the practice of composition; producing, during his student's career, several works for Orchestra and for voices; which, being performed at Academy concerts, were considered to evince great ability, and to promise future eminence. One movement was written of a Pianoforte Concerto, the joint composition of Macfarren and his distinguished fellow-student, William Sterndale Bennett; but, not improbably because of the difficulty experienced by Macfarren, especially in its performance, through his defective sight, no more was written, and he did not again essay any performance on the instrument, even of semi-public kind. Shortly after the termination of his Academy studentship, circumstances induced him to accept a teaching engagement in the Isle of Man, where he remained, however, for only twelve months, a dreary sojourn, unenlivened by any musical opportunities. save his own performance on the pianoforte, of Bach's Organ Fugues (the pedal part being performed on the double-bass by an old naval officer); and the composition, by special request of the amateurs in the Island, of an overture for performance at his farewell concert, adapted to the locally available resources, which were, a few violins, one violoncello, sixteen flutes, and one clarionet.

Shortly after his return to London in 1837, he was appointed Professor of Harmony and Composition at his Alma Mater, the Royal Academy of Music.

Among his successful early works was the Overture to "Chevy Chase," written under special stress of circumstances in one Friday night, so as to be ready for copying on the Saturday, in time for rehearsal and performance on the following Monday, at Drury Lane Theatre. This was in 1836, but though the work of a young man, and so rapidly produced, the Overture proved to be of no mere ephemeral interest: not only was it selected

by Mendelssohn, some years afterwards, for performance at the Gewandhaus Concerts, Leipsic (where at that time the impression obtained—that an English composer was no composer); but it still finds acceptance with our own concert audiences, having been included in the programme of the last Philharmonic Concert this season.

During his sojourn in the Isle of Man he commenced the composition of an opera to a libretto by his father, which was subsequently published and put in rehearsal, but from an unfortunate combination of adverse circumstances was never performed. I have myself examined the entire manuscript score.

His next operatic venture, however, had happier success, though bearing the singularly unhappy title "The Devil's Opera." This was performed at the English Opera House, now the Lyceum Theatre, in 1838, and successfully closed an otherwise unsuccessful season.

At about this time Macfarren became involved in a controversy, from which he never wholly escaped, through the long remainder of his career. This was occasioned by his adoption and subsequent staunch advocacy, contrary to his previous training, of the theory of Harmony advanced by Dr. Alfred Day. consequence of his espousal of this theory, which was opposed to the views held by the musical professors of the period, it became necessary that Macfarren should resign his professorship at the Royal Academy, which appointment he did not resume till about six years later, when prejudice against the heterodox views had somewhat subsided. With the Day theory Macfarren was identified as its foremost champion all along, he having been unswerving and unflinching in its defence, both by spoken utterances and by his writings; no less than three books having been devoted mainly to its exposition and illustration, namely, "Rudiments of Harmony," "Six Lectures on Harmony" (delivered before the Royal Institution), and his "Eighty Musical Sentences illustrating the use of chromatic chords." In this connection, though without special reference to the Day theory, may be mentioned Macfarren's other two books "Counterpoint: a course of study," and "Musical History, briefly narrated and technically discussed, with a roll of the names of musicians and the times and places of their births and deaths." The very title of this last-mentioned book, the body of which was a reprint of his article "Music," in the latest edition of the" Encyclopedia Britannica." may suggest an amount of thought and painstaking research concerning details not to be easily over-estimated, when it is stated that it was prepared at the latter part of his life, long after he had become totally blind. I have made this chronological anticipation in my narrative, in order to group together the volumes on music written by Macfarren.

Even this enumeration, however, is not complete without mentioning a tractate on "The Structure of a Sonata," and a brochure, "Life of Handel," prepared on occasion of the first Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace. The manuscript of this memoir was lost in transit by post, but in order that it should be ready for the opening day of the Festival, Macfarren re-dictated the whole of it from memory—a marvellous feat, considering the number of dates and minor details which were included. When the original manuscript was subsequently recovered, it was found that the two only differed in a very few instances.

In addition, moreover, to these separate small works, Macfarren was a pretty constant contributor to the musical periodicals of the time: not, however, of light, ill-considered articles, as a mere feuilletonist, but of thoughtful criticisms, on such works as Bach's "Church Cantatas," and the like; or of disquisitions on various subjects concerning the art—needing and evincing experience, thought, and mature judgment, combined with ripe musical scholarship.

To return, however, to the main current of his life. In 1845, when Laurent was manager of Covent Garden Theatre, he determined to bring out Sophocles' Autigone with the then recently composed music of Mendelssohn, consisting of choruses, single and double, and also of orchestral music to be played during spoken recitation. Macfarren was at the time musical director to the theatre, and it became his duty, a most onerous and difficult one for any conductor, to superintend the production of this elaborate work. It involved the necessity of complete acquaintance with the text, as well as with the music—and with the stage procedure, and various details of a most minute kind, about which Mendelssohn wrote a long letter of directions to Macfarren, from Frankfort, dated December 8th, 1844, saying—

"Have many thanks for the interest you take in bringing out my music to the *Antigone* choruses; I am very glad it is in your hands, because it wants a musician like you to make it go as intended—quite as a subordinate part of the whole, as a mere link in the chain of the poem, and yet perfectly clear and independent in itself."

Then follow many directions concerning the chorus-singers, their position, the pronunciation of the words, the rapid succession of dialogue and music, the action, and other matters. All this, difficult to accomplish under ordinary circumstances, was specially so to Macfarren, because though not absolutely blind at that time, he was without any sight for practical purpose in this arduous work. It was necessary that he should have the whole of the words and music completely in his memory, and conduct without book, even to prompt that memory. This marvellous feat

Macfarren accomplished, and the performance had a run of many nights. As illustrating his presence of mind and readiness, he told a pupil years afterwards the following incident, though not for the purpose for which I repeat it: "When he was conducting the Antigone, in years gone by, there was a point where the chorus were to walk on to the stage singing. The orchestra were playing their part in front, and the chorus marched in from the back, having begun their song out of time. Macfarren detected what was wrong, shouted to his band behind him: 'Cut out half a bar!' and they all got together again, without the audience being a bit the wiser."

He undertook a large amount of editing and arranging. Among his labours of this kind must be mentioned his collaboration with the late Mr. William Chappell, in his important work of collecting and annotating old English melodies; the complete work being entitled "Popular Music of the Olden Time;" the airs being harmonized by Macfarren, and doubtless, much other material, if only in the way of suggestion, being furnished by him as a practical musician. Macfarren also edited and arranged various works by Purcell, Orlando Gibbons, and other early English composers, in connection with the now defunct "Musical Antiquarian Society "-and for the also defunct "Handel Society" (of which, moreover, he was secretary and main founder on his father's suggestion), he edited "Belshazzar," "Judas Maccabeus," and "lephtha," In subsequent years, he edited, or wrote analytical prefaces to other works of a similar character, notably the "Messiah" and Haydn's "Creation," of which he prepared what were termed "the performing editions" for a Music Publishing Company.

Mention only must be made of his series of Operas, all more or less successful, besides that already referred to. These were "An Adventure of Don Quixote," 1846; "Charles the Second," 1849; "Robin Hood," 1860; "She Stoops to Conquer" and "Helvellyn," 1864; and two Operettas, "Jessy Lea," 1863, and "The Soldier's Legacy," 1864; and two others which have not been produced. In addition to all these, he composed a number of Cantatas: "May Day," 1857; "The Sleeper Awakened," 1850; "Lenora," 1853; "Christmas," 1859; "The Lady of the Lake," 1877—all of them large works for Chorus, Solo Voices, and Orchestra—and two small Cantatas for Female Voices, "Songs in a Cornfield" and "Around the Hearth."

Besides these, there was the music to "Ajax," written for performance at Cambridge.

And not only did he write many important works, such as Symphonies, Overtures, Quartets, and other Chamber works, Sonatas, Organ Music, and a host of Songs, Part-Songs, and the

like, besides much Church-music, in his later years, but also undertook the duties of two important offices, the Principalship of the Royal Academy of Music, and the Professorship of Music in the University of Cambridge, involving an immense amount of labour—his appointment to both positions taking place in 1875, on the death of Sir W. Sterndale Bennett. Besides these, as though he had not enough to do, he, at about the same period, commenced a new series of works in a department untried by him, that of Oratorio; his "St. John the Baptist," first performed in 1873, being followed by "The Resurrection," 1876; "Joseph," 1877; and "King David," 1883. "The St. George's Te Deum" was also a work of considerable magnitude, of the same or similar class.

Nor was all this, by any means, the whole work in which he engaged. From a somewhat early period in his career, he was not a little sought after as a lecturer. Besides the "Six Lectures on Harmony," already referred to, he delivered various lectures, and courses of lectures, at the London Institution, the Royal Institution, before the Musical Association, the University of Cambridge, a course each year in his Professorial capacity to the Students of the Royal Academy of Music, in this very College where we are now met, and in other places and before other audiences. And these lectures were for the most part, either theoretical -as when he delivered a course on "Counterpoint" – or analytical, on such subjects as "Mozart's Symphonies," "Beethoven's Sonatas," "Bach's Fugues," &c., involving a great deal of minute reference to single passages, as well as comprehensive grasp of the whole; or historical, involving a great many names, dates, and incidents. And all these, of course, were delivered entirely memoriter, and (except perhaps in quite his later years) with little hesitation, and very rarely a slip or mistake. And all these compositions, papers, lectures, were prepared in such intervals as he could command, amidst countless business occupations, in the latter ten or twelve years of his life at all events, arising from his large amount of teaching and the very constant and heavy duties of his position as Principal of the Royal Academy, especially, as well as those of his Professorship at Cambridge.

His sight had for very long before his total blindness been so impaired that only with great difficulty, by the aid of a very powerful glass, could he write at all. In 1848 he went to New York, enticed by the reputed skill of an oculist there; but all treatment was utterly vain: though the oculist tried to persuade him that there was improvement, notwithstanding that he could see no better. The only good in connection with that absence from England was the composition, in New York, of his Opera, "Charles II." He entirely discontinued all writing about the year 1860: entire blindness followed, about 1865. From 1860 all had to be done by dictation.

In order to sustain my contention, and make it clear to you why I hold Macfarren's work and achievement unique, I fear that I must tax your attention by being, for a little time, somewhat technical. I address now, specially, those of my distinguished audience who, with all their earnest intelligence, and all their artistic and even musical taste and sympathies, are not technically trained musicians. I must try to help you to realise what is involved in the production, the conceiving and thinking, the elaboration, the writing, of a large musical composition: how much more is involved in the dictation of such a work, especially with never a glance at the manuscript to refresh the memory; how much more still is involved in the successive production of a number of such works, through a long series of years; and that, moreover, not as the one only occupation of a quiet life, in the retirement of a recluse, with no distractions, no interruptions, no diversion of the calm flow of thought in one channel, but amidst countless and most distracting, diverse, absorbing, and exhausting occupations of other kinds.

The bar-lines of a musical composition being "scored" across the paper, the copy of the work, in its entire completeness, is termed a Score. The term is sometimes used even with regard to pianoforte music, in which, as you know, two staves only are braced to be read together; or with a song, for instance, with pianoforte accompaniment, three staves; or a quartet, vocal or instrumental, four staves. When a large work for Orchestra and Chorus, such as an Oratorio Chorus, is in Score, a whole page has to be braced, scored across for simultaneous reading, of, perhaps, eighteen or more staves. For instance, at the top of the page, four staves for the four pairs of wooden wind instruments, flutes, oboes, clarionets, and bassoons, with possibly an additional staff for the double bassoon or contra-fagotto, then the brass instruments, horns, trumpets, trombones, four or five more staves, with, perhaps, another for ophicleide, or some such extra instrument; then a line for the drums; then, say, four staves for the chorus; and five more for the stringed instruments; first and second violins, viola, violoncello, and double bass; and, still further, two staves for the organ part.

Now this sketch may enable the less trained musically to realize somewhat the amount of grasp, if I may apply the term, required in order to read a Score—a full Score. And besides this, there is the complexity arising from the fact that, not only are the different Clefs superposed, not, as might be at first supposed, with the instruments arranged according to the graduation of pitch or register, but in groups of quality; and, moreover, with certain instruments—as the Clarionet and some brass instruments—written, for reasons which I cannot now stay to explain, not according to the actual notes played, but, for instance a second or a third higher, and so on.

Now, if this may give some idea as to what is involved in reading a Score, think a little what must be involved in writing a Score, such as I have sketched. First of all the composition of the work, in its broad outline, then the determination according to the multifarious qualities of tone of the different instruments, singly or in combination, how the various passages shall be allotted—instrumented—to produce proper balance of tone, tonecolouring, contrast, and so on. And then, if you can at all realize the amount of knowledge, discriminating judgment, and such-like attainments requisite for such a task, add to this the dictating of such production of the mind, in all its multifarious and involved details, without even seeing any portion of the work at all; and this not with one plain straightforward movement, such as a march or a minuet, with little continuity, or development, or "working," as it is termed, but through all the elaborate structure of an Opera, or, still more, of an Oratorio, with those most intricate forms of musical structure known as the contrapuntal and fugal—severe enough tests of a musician's capacity, even when he has the great assistance of sight, so as to sketch, and ponder, and re-sketch, and revise, and so on, and so on. And think of all this process being carried on, not in a hermit's seclusion during a recess, uninterrupted by other work, other cares and distractions, to break the continuity of thought; but at parenthetical hours, when immersed in all the professional business of a much-sought teacher, a University Professor, and Principal of a large Musical Academy. And then, think of this being wrought, not just with one work, a magnum Opus, but with a series of Oratorios, Cantatas, Operas, and the like—one such, the "St. George's Te Deum," being for an ordinary Orchestra, such as I have described, with chorus and solo voices, and with the addition of two military bands, in combination or alternation, and with a long Prelude, introducing National Anthems of various countries. Think of all this, as part of the work of the declining years of a blind man, and if it does not present to your mind a notion of unique mental power, I fear that my long paragraph must be a unique specimen of mental and descriptive weakness and incapacity.

How did he do this? What was his method of procedure?

In a Chorus with Orchestra he would dictate the voice parts first of all, singly, and subsequently the instrumental parts. In the case of a Choral Fugue, the Subject would be dictated first and then the Counterpoint added—a double Counterpoint, i.e., an accompanying voice-part, susceptible of being placed either above or beneath the Subject in the course of the Fugue. But for some detail, hear this graphic account, furnished to me, most obligingly, by a lady who acted, most efficiently, as one of his amanuenses, and who was greatly valued and esteemed by him:—

"Of his manner of composition and the necessity for dictating all he composed to an amanuensis, it has been said that this must have hindered inspiration. I think not; in one way it aided it, for it compelled him to concentration of thought; for the separate movement, at all events, if not more, was necessarily complete before a note was written. Thus, one of his most beautiful songs 'Love is strong as death,' in 'Joseph,' was written in this manner. When I went to him one morning to write what might be ready, he said: 'I thought of this song as I was coming home in the cab from the concert last night; and finding a fire waiting for me at home to sit out, I finished it' (all in his mind, you must remember). Someone has said that hearing music is not conducive to much composition. I fancy, too, rattling over the London streets in a four wheeled cab might be thought not apposite for composition, and very different to the cosy studies and comfortable chairs, pink satin suites, etc., of some writers. But there is quiet, even in the midst of a noise, and to him, the mere cessation of business was the signal for musical thought, and he had no outside vision to disturb his concentration of thought. However, thus was the song ready in his mind, waiting for me to write it down. He would sit at the little old square piano in his den, I by his side (so that I could aid my ears by a glance at his fingers), paper of twenty-four lines, and a favourite ink-pot in the piano corner. In that song there are four horns. 'We will write them first, for they have most to play, and will want the longest bars.' I believe he dictated them in C, the key in which they were to be written. This, and other habits he had, show that he had the Score before his mind's eye, as it ought to be written. The four horns written for one page only, and the bar lines drawn up and down the rest of the Score; the rest of the instruments were filled in for the page, the highest first, and so downwards to the bass. The symphony written, line by line, the voice-part, words, and music indicated, because that would take the most space. Then the accompaniment for that was begun at the top line, and so downwards, line by line. When I turned over for a new page, 'Where did we leave off?' would be the question put; before I could refer back, 'Oh, I remember,' and he would play the next bar. Sometimes the voice-part would be written for the whole, or a large part of the song-specially this would be the case in Choral works, or in a Choral Fugue, where the voices and words were very much involved. Once only I recollect making a pencil 'sketch,' as he called it, of a composition, that was the Overture to 'Joseph;' but I believe it was as much out of consideration for my inexperience as for any wish to help his own work of composition; the ostensible reason being that he might forget the course of the work in the delay of writing Score. I have been told he sometimes forgot a composed work before he had opportunity to get it written. In my own work with him, I only recollect one slight forgetfulness. That was a Counterpoint he had worked out for a bass part to some chorus. When I went to write, he had forgotten it, much to his distress, and he was obliged to think it out again, bar by bar, as I sat writing. I remember now the warm thanks he gave for what he called my wonderful patience in writing while he was repairing his error, and wasting my time, as he called it. As a fact, the error was a far greater pain to himself than to me, for it was a real trial to him.

"I have been told he was impatient with his writers. I always found the impatience was at what he considered his own slowness, not mine—though I was slow enough. Never but once have I heard a word of complaint, of fretfulness from him at his blindness; that was only two months before he died, when he must have been suffering keenly from his extreme weak state and effort to keep up. He wrote, urging me; 'Write music, write; you have not the necessity of waiting for other hands; you need scarcely even memory for your writing.'

"Illness did not make him forget his composed work. One day he broke off in the midst of dictating to me, feeling very ill, and he remained ill the rest of the day; before I left the house, however, an arrangement was made that I was to come the next day, then the movement was finished that had been broken off the day before.

"I have often heard him speak of Mozart's manner of composition, having the movements complete, up to every note, and every mark of expression in his mind, before he wrote down a single bar; and remembering it, so that he could, if he lost the first copy, make another from his memory. But it was the same way that G. A. M. had. Possibly it was the imminent danger he himself was in of forgetting, before another pair of hands could write down, that made him feel the excellence of Mozart's memory, more than the completeness of the composition, which was his own compelled habit.

"Not many of his friends will easily forget that stooping figure, with his blindly rushing walk along the London streets—his little guide-boy straining to keep pace with the master's eagerness. It was that hurrying walk which cost him his broken nose, in times back, when his sight was failing—not enduring to have a guide, he one day struck against a tree in the park. His was an almost ugly face, till you caught sight of the grand forehead. It was in the Senate House at Cambridge that I realized this, where I saw him standing in his simple black gown, the centre of a crowd of men and gay dresses, in the fine old hall with its dark oak fittings. The light streamed from the large windows upon him, and singled out from among them all his veiled eyes and large brows. It seemed to point him out—the man who had more

than most men of pain to bear, and yet worked harder, thought deeper, and sympathised more keenly than most men. We, who loved him, thought him almost beautiful at such moments: we read the sympathy in his heart through the pity of our own.

"On that same occasion he had to go through the ceremony of presenting some Bachelors of Music to the Vice-Chancellor to receive their degrees. There were some five or six of them clustering round him, each one was to take hold of his hand—a finger for each was scarcely enough. But he himself must be led, as he led them forward. It seemed a miniature of his life—a leader, led, as he was all his life, and therein was his unique influence.

"He used to say, somewhat bitterly, it was a mistake to fancy that blind people were quicker in their other senses. He could not hear better than other people, he would say: certainly he was something deaf in the latter years, and required one to speak clearly; but of quickness of hearing, intelligence of hearing, he had no lack. His powers of singling out one voice-part from another, of analysing chords when the music was in course, of recognizing one voice from another in speech, or knowing the direction of the voice, was very great. Often in class, one pupil would change position; the next remark or answer made, he would turn to the new direction: 'Oh, you are there, are you?' would come with his return answer.

"His touch, too, was very fine, as one expects from a sightless man. I well remember giving him a snowdrop one day to feel. He held it by the stem with one hand, while with the tips of the fingers of the other hand he felt the blossom. 'How lightly it hangs,' he said, 'and there is a tender fragrance in it.' It was a quick perception which could notice the scent of a snowdrop! I remember, too, one day, a friend was playing to him in his little den, whom he had known only since his blindness, yet she was very intimate in the house. He said, 'I wish I knew what you looked like.' She lifted his hand to her face and made him feel over it. His hand was large and awkward in shape, but she says that she can feel even now the reverent touch of the hand, the satin-like softness of the skin of the palm and fingers, and the gentle clinging touch as if the nerves were nearer the surface than in an ordinary hand, and each, severally, under control. 'Do you think you should know me now, if you saw me?' 'Yes, I think I should, now,' was the lingering answer. I wonder if Tennyson knew a blind touch when he said—

> 'Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still!'"

"I was once told an anecdote of him that he learnt to swim by accidentally falling into a deep pond; that, finding himself in the water, he struck out like a dog and saved himself. If this be true, it is an example of the indomitable pluck that we all knew so well. Moreover, an example of presence of mind and of an adaptability to circumstances that many of his opponents would scarcely give him credit for, in later years."

"At the close of the Academical year, in 1887, when dining with the Professors of the Royal Academy of Music, he, in acknowledging the toast of his health, begged them to tell him if they ever detected such failing in that health as unfitted him for the due discharge of his work. That he was ailing and failing was only too manifest. But, after the vacation, he returned to his post, and addressed the Academicians as usual, at the beginning of the new Academical year. On Sunday, October 30th, he went out with his young guide: tottered, fell, and had to take a cab. On the Monday morning, however, he sent for his amanuensis, arranged his work, dictated some important letters on Academy business, and then while receiving some alleviating attention from a faithful attendant, passed quietly away.

"Not till his death comes to open their eyes to it, do men see what his nearest and dearest have long seen, that his finest characteristic was the tenderness of his heart, the depth and strength of his feeling, the quickness and sincerity of his sympathy, for all of this comes out in the music.

"We who knew him closest feel how much his great sorrow—those fifty years of first twilight, and then total blindness—made his character what it was; that he could never have been the man he was, the friend he was, nor the artist he was, without it. Doubtless the story of this half-century of effort to live usefully and bravely under what would have been to most men a crushing weight, and the culminating ten months struggle for life and duty has shown what otherwise men could not know. All now can realize what he felt when he wrote all that is touching in his music, and the verdict comes to all hearts: 'He felt this, and we can feel with him.'"

FRIDAY, JULY 25th.

THE RIGHT HON. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., took the chair, at 10.45 am., and the following is his speech, as reported in *The Times*, on Saturday, July 26th; omitting, as in all other cases throughout this Report, the marks of applause with which various portions of the speech were greeted:—

"The CHAIRMAN, after referring to the fact that the Royal Commission on the Education and Training of the Blind was entirely due to the efforts of his late lamented colleague. Professor Fawcett, who appealed to Mr. Gladstone's Government to grant it, said that the Duke of Westminster was good enough to take the chairmanship. The Government, of which he (Mr. Mundella) was a member, left office before the Commission was formed, but Sir Richard Cross, the then Home Secretary, immediately appointed it, and he was one of the first members appealed to to serve upon it, and they commenced the enquiry with a limited number in 1885. It was subsequently found that it was desirable to enlarge the Commission. The health of the Duke of Westminster was not strong enough to continue the arduous labours of the Commission, and Lord Egerton of Tatton was good enough to preside in his place. He (the speaker) did not know that he ever served on a Royal Commission—and he had served on a good many-where all the members were so earnestly devoted to their work. He need not tell them that it was of surpassing interest. There were men on that Commission who had made the question the study and the duty of their lives. Those present knew what Dr. Armitage had done for the last thirty years: no words of his could convey anything like a proper sense of his splendid services in that respect. Dr. Campbell had created what he was proud to think was one of the best institutions in the world, and he had associated with them his late friends Sir Tindal Robertson and Dr. M'Donnell, of Dublin. They had dealt during the week with the question of primary education, and he was delighted to see that their first meeting was presided over by Mrs. Fawcett. They then dealt with the question of State aid; from that they went on to technical education, as industrial education and musical education; and from that to handicrafts as a means of earning a livelihood. And on Thursday, one of his most distinguished colleagues on the Commission, Sir Lyon Playfair, presided over them, when they dealt with the Higher Education for the Universities and Professions. To-day they had got to their last meeting. and it was most important, for all that would be done in the future by State aid would be incomplete if they did not carry out by a good and well-organized system that last question which they had to consider—namely, the assistance to and the supervision of the blind after leaving school. He could hardly do better to illustrate his feeling in the matter than by telling them his own experience. When he became a member of the Royal Commission he conceived it to be his duty to acquaint himself with the work that was being done with respect to the education of the blind in the various countries of Europe, and his first Parliamentary holiday, in 1885, was given up to travelling in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, to inquire into and examine into their methods of treating the blind, and into the way by which State aid might

best come to their assistance. He quite satisfied himself as to the question of elementary education. Primary education we had agreed upon-compulsory, universal, and they might say freefor the seeing. It was free in Scotland, and we were told, he believed, that it would be free in England next year. If it should be universal, compulsory, and free for the sighted, surely it should be equally accessible and available for the blind. If the sighted had claims upon us for free education, surely the blind had still greater claims, and the community should see that they were qualified and equipped in after life. He would not detain them by giving any description of the institutions he visited on the Continent, but he would mention that in Dresden he found that more care was taken, more kindly interest was evoked, and more organization was established in the interests of the blind than in any other country in the world. That was a bold thing to say. He did not say that they spent more money; he thought, perhaps, they spent less, but the administration was so admirable that we ought to profit by it. What he related to the Blind Commission had long before been treated by his friend Dr. Armitage who until the appointment of the Royal Commission found himself a voice crying in the wilderness; but the vox clamantis found in the Royal Commission an echo, and the Commission resolved, after reading Dr. Armitage's treatise and hearing what he (Mr. Mundella) had to say, to go to Germany and see for themselves. The result was that the Royal Commission made a Report with suggestions for improving the condition of the industrial blind. He did not want to say too much upon the 117th paragraph of the Report, which said, 'The leading difficulty in the present condition of the blind is that, with few exceptions, no care or supervision is exercised by institutions over the past pupils who have been trained in the institutions, and consequently many fail to earn their living or maintain themselves, by honest labour after they leave school.' He might say, however, that there were many who left school in this country after receiving a few years of very imperfect instruction only to gravitate to the streets. Now, they wanted to put a stop to that. One little sentence in the 120th paragraph of the Report told the story as it impressed itself upon the Commissioners:—'During their tour—it was in Germany the Commissioners saw no blind beggars in Saxony, and they were informed that begging on the part of the blind had practically ceased to exist.' Now, in our own country, where private benevolence was very active, and only organization was lacking, they could hardly walk along the streets of London without seeing the poor blind begging, and very often associated with and traded upon by the lowest classes of the community. If they were to complete their work they must save this afflicted class from this calamity. He rejoiced more than he could find words to express it at the fact that they had on the table of the House of Commons two Bills for the education of the blind and the deaf. any rate that was the first outcome of the Royal Commission, and it was an augury that the State had at last recognized the blind. He could not say that he was quite satisfied with the Bill same time he would confess that if it passed, even in its present shape, they would have accomplished a very great thing. They would have got in the thin end of the wedge, and, having once got it in they would soon drive it all the way home. The Scotch Bill was purely for making grants to the blind up to sixteen years When he considered that the grant for elementary education for the sighted for both sexes was given up to the age of eighteen and nineteen, he wanted to know why the blind should stop short at sixteen? It was an absurdity, for the blind required an exceptional training. What they would have to do was to get the time extended; that was what they must aim at, and what they must accomplish. He would say no more about State aid at present, except this—that he had intimated to Lord Cranbrook his heartiest sympathies, and that he had a few amendments which he must accept. What they had to consider was the question of the adaptability of the Saxon system. Committee had been appointed to report upon it, and he supposed Dr. Armitage would be the chairman. He had stated to them his raison d'etre for being there that day."

Mr. Henry J. Wilson then read the Report of the Sub-Committee, on—

ASSISTANCE TO, AND SUPERVISION OF, THE BLIND AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL.

I.—The great object to be kept in view in educating the blind is to enable them to support themselves in after life, and to make them useful and respectable members of society.

II.—When the blind have received a suitable education, it is difficult to provide them with employment by which they are able to maintain themselves, and this difficulty is greatly increased in the case of those who are entirely thrown on their own resources after leaving school.

III.—The employments open to the blind are (a) Manual Trades; (b) Music—as Tuners, Organists, or Teachers of Music; (c) Literary Teachers and Liberal Professions. (a) The general rule that men can earn more by manual trades than women holds good also with regard to the blind. The method most relied upon in the United Kingdom to render the blind self-supporting, is to assemble them in workshops, and to pay them by piece-work, reckoned at the usual market value of their labour, and in many cases adding a charitable supplement. On this plan, the workshop buys the materials, looks out for orders, and as long as it can

obtain a sufficient number of orders the work-people have no care or anxiety. It is believed by some that it is impossible for a blind workman to work to advantage independently of workshops, but cases undoubtedly exist in which this is accomplished, though they are comparatively rare. Mr. Plater, of Birmingham, and Mr. Hall, formerly of Barking, are instances in which blind men have become basket manufacturers on a large scale, employing many journeymen, and making sufficient, not only to live, but to lay by. A fair number of other blind men are personally known to the members of the Sub-Committee, who have for years been fully maintaining themselves at home as basket makers, but these are men of exceptional energy, and in many cases they have been placed, at starting, under more favourable conditions than are enjoyed by many others who have failed.

Another class of workshop is that which is connected with a school, and under the same general management. The pupils who are selected to enter the workshop, on leaving the school, are at once provided with work, and receive wages, with or without a charitable supplement. This plan is a special feature of Scotch institutions for the blind; but even there, all the pupils leaving the school are not drafted into the workshop, while in most English schools to which a workshop is attached, this is so small that only a very few of the pupils who leave the school can be received into it as journeymen. The result is that the most capable are generally selected, and those who are less skilful or have less energy have to make their way in the world as they best can; and these are just the people who are most in need of being properly started and assisted or encouraged when they meet with difficulties. At York the journeymen selected to work in the workshops are mainly those who live in the city or the neighbourhood.

The girls, as a rule, are unable to earn their living at home, and cannot generally even do so in workshops without a charitable supplement. It would be greatly to the advantage of many girls who have no satisfactory home, if, on leaving the institution, they could be received into industrial homes connected with it, paying for their board and lodging by their work.

In 1886 there were in England 749 blind pupils attending schools, to which workshops are attached. 270 work-people were accommodated in the workshops connected with the schools. Reckoning the average stay of pupils in school at eight years, about ninety-three pupils would leave school annually, from which it would at once be seen that the great majority do not find employment in the workshops. At the same time there were in all the schools for the blind in England 1260 pupils, including 172 day pupils, and the whole workshop accommodation, including the workshops attached to the schools, was 547. Again, reckoning the average stay of each pupil in school at eight years, 157

would leave the schools annually, so that but few of these can be received into existing workshops. In this calculation allowance must be made for the pupils who are sent out as musicians, but the number of these is small. In Scotland where all the workshops are connected with schools, there were 141 pupils and 350 in the workshops. Again, reckoning the average stay in school as eight years, about seventeen pupils would leave the school annually, so that in this respect the blind are much better provided for in Scotland than they are in England. In Ireland there were 109 pupils, and no workshops connected with the schools; but there were eighty-four blind persons in independent workshops.

It is very difficult to ascertain to what extent those not received into workshops can support themselves. Most of the schools have no register, or a very imperfect one of their old pupils; and when examined before the Royal Commission were generally unable to say what these were doing. The Commissioners made special inquiry on this subject from individual blind persons throughout the country, the answer to which will be found on page ninety-nine of the Appendix to the Report of the Royal Commission. Of those who had been in Institutions 1141 males replied; of these 355 stated they were able to maintain themselves, 730 unable; fifty-six did not answer this question. Of 638 females who had been in institutions, seventy-five were able to maintain themselves, 544 unable, nineteen did not answer this question. These figures show an unsatisfactory state of things among those blind who have passed through institutions; and those who have not had this advantage are still worse off.

IV.—English institutions have hitherto, as a rule, considered that their task was over when their pupils leave them, and though no doubt many cases exist in which someone connected with the institution takes an interest in the future success of individual pupils, still, officially, the connection of the pupils with the institution ceases when they leave it, the consequence is that the committees of scarcely any institutions know how many of their former pupils have failed in life, and when they do, this failure is scarcely ever attributed to imperfect training; whereas, when touch is kept with the old pupils, the institution often receives most valuable information, which enables the managers to trace the cause of failure, and to remedy any defects in the training, which have been brought to light. On this account it is most important that if the employment in workshops forms the whole or a great part of the plan of assistance of old pupils, these workshops should form part of the institution; as is the case in Scotland and some of the English institutions; leaving independent workshops to train and employ those who have become blind in adult life, which is no less important than the training of the young. It has already been stated that in Scotland a fair proportion of old pupils are permanently assisted when they leave the institutions by being received into the workshops connected with them, and that if this plan were to be adopted in England it would involve the building of workshops in connection with all the institutions, that do not now possess them, and such an enlargement of those which already exist, which probably the most sanguine would consider impracticable. Taking Edinburgh as an example, the number of pupils in the school is forty-two; the number in the workshops 178. A school of 190 pupils would, if it provided for its old pupils in the same proportion as Edinburgh does, have to build workshops capable of accommodating about 800 blind work-people. It must also be remembered that at present it is very difficult for the adult blind to obtain industrial training. This would have to be provided for, if the recommendations of the Royal Commission are carried out, which would further greatly increase the numbers to be accommodated in the workshops.

V.—There is, however, another plan of providing for old pupils, without the necessity of building enormous workshops; this plan is de-centralizing, in contradistinction to collecting great numbers together in workshops. It is a plan which has been adopted with great success in many parts of Germany; and a long experience has satisfied the German Directors that the plan is perfectly workable, and under it, almost all the male pupils become entirely self-supporting, and most of the female pupils can maintain themselves with a little aid from the institutions. This plan was first carried out at Dresden, for the Saxon blind, where it has been in operation for about fifty years; it is equally successful in the province of Schleswig-Holstein and in Mecklenburg, and has greatly improved the condition of the blind wherever it has been introduced. The most essential feature of the system is that the Fürsorge Society, connected with the institution, takes care that the old pupils, as long as they behave themselves properly and work to the best of their ability, shall receive such moral and material support that they shall in no case be driven to apply for parish assistance, and in fact the receipt of such relief or begging in any form, disqualifies them from participating in the fund. The essential part of this system is, not that the old pupils should work at home instead of in workshops (as workshops may be and often are indispensable in the case of those who have not the energy or other qualities which will enable them to succeed at home) but its essential features are that the institution continues in close relation with its former pupils, and assists them to maintain themselves by every means in its power. In practically working out this problem, it has been found that where pupils have been properly trained, they can generally succeed in maintaining themselves at home, without working in workshops. The Director, however, has to be always ready to advise, and generally visits all the pupils from

time to time. The close connection between the institution and its old pupils is equally necessary whether they are musicians or working at handicraft trades; but there is a great difference between these two classes, as blind musicians, when properly trained and fairly started, generally make incomes which enable them to live comfortably and lay by enough for sickness or old age; whereas the handicraft workers are fortunate if they are able to maintain themselves and their families; but cannot as a rule save much. It is therefore essential that, in their case at any rate, a large fund should be collected to assist those, who are unable completely to maintain themselves, to make provision for sickness and old age.

VI. – It has often been said that this plan is not applicable to England, on account of the great competition, and from our people not being so thrifty as they are in Germany, but, on close examination, the competition with the seeing does not seem to differ much, and if the English are wanting in thrift, thrift ought to be a part of the training given at institutions. It is certainly a fact, that in many parts of Germany and France, where the blind are, as a rule, maintaining themselves at home completely or to a great extent, they were as badly off in this respect as the blind of England are at present, before their institutions had begun to keep up close relations with them and to consider it a part of their duty to look after and help their pupils after leaving.

VII.—A fund for the assistance of former pupils was started at York in 1866 by the late Mrs. Markham. The capital amounts to £800, and the interest is employed in assisting pupils when leaving, and at other times, as they need, and so far as the funds will allow. At York, therefore, the care of old pupils is carried out to a certain extent and only needs developing. At the Royal Normal College for the Blind the Old Pupils' Guild aims at finding places for the pupils after leaving the college, and at giving material assistance when necessary. The Guild was only formally inaugurated in 1889, but the plan has been in operation ever since the foundation of the college, and has powerfully contributed to the after success of the pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

We recommend

VIII.—That institutions shall not consider that their duties and responsibilities cease on the pupil leaving, but that they shall do their best to start them, and to keep touch with them, so that assistance may be offered them in after life when necessary.

IX.—That a register shall be kept of all pupils who leave the school, so that the Committee can readily see which pupils have ceased to be in touch with the institution, and to know what the others are doing. X.—That a fund shall be raised in connection with each institution, for the purpose of assisting former pupils.

XI.—As it will be difficult to visit pupils spread over a large area, it is recommended that institutions shall draw their pupils from the counties or districts in which they are situated, as is already done at York and some other county institutions.

Mr. Rawson Carter: If there is one thing which should make us feel earnestly the importance of improving our Institutions for the Blind throughout the country, it is the paragraph in the Report which has just been read to us, showing the enormous number of failures from those who have passed through our institutions. It appears to me a most melancholy fact, that so large a percentage of the pupils of our institutions should be reported to be utter failures, so far as their being able to maintain themselves independently in after life. Well, this must arise to a very large extent from the want of proper training; there is something at fault. It will not only be the want of proper supervision in after life; but it also appears to me the want of proper and careful training during the time they reside with us in our institutions. We have heard a good deal on that subject, and, therefore I shall not occupy much time with regard to it. I mention it simply in order that we may bear it in mind. and endeavour to carry it home, and that we may endeavour to put our institutions on a much better footing. Now, if we arrive at that result, it will be one great advantage, and a result to be achieved from a Conference such as this. With regard to the occupations, it appears to me, we should endeavour, in connection with the teaching of our institutions, to teach such occupations, as these pupils can carry on independently when they leave us. It is quite true, we cannot make all musicians, we cannot make all pianoforte tuners. There is no question that the recommendations of the report are of the highest importance. It is a question of giving a helping hand, and making our pupils feel, that in the institutions they have passed through, they have places where they can refer to for help; and if we can adopt a system by which we may be enabled to give them that help and assistance, we shall be fulfilling a duty which devolves upon us. I move—"That the Report be adopted, and that the best thanks of the Conference be given to the Sub-Committee for preparing the same."

MR. PLATER: I second this Resolution with very much pleasure; and to one who has ever felt that, when an institution turns out a pupil, it has only accomplished half the purpose which it has in view, you can imagine how thoroughly I endorse its contents. There is nothing in that Report that I can see to find fault with; it seems to me, according to my way of thinking, the most perfect Report I have ever met with, to carry out the

purposes for which these Institutions for the Blind were intended. Now, I may say that I am a great believer in cultivating an independent business for the blind; but, I believe that employment in workshops should be established for those who, for want of business ability, are unable to carry on a business of their own. Supposing a pupil has learnt his trade, and started in business in a town within reach of the institution he has left, I contend that the duty of that institution is to send some one to wait upon the leading tradesmen and manufacturers in the district, and say—"We have just turned out a thoroughly good workman, who is anxious to earn a living by his trade, and we feel it our duty to ask you to give him a sample order to see if he can make baskets, or other goods, as well as any one else. We ask you for the preference if you can buy of him on the same terms as elsewhere." If institutions were to do this, and occasionally visit him, go over his business and advise him as to markets and general business—this done by business men would be of material assistance to a beginner, and would help, not in a spirit of charity, but would give him the means of self-help, and assist him in most cases to an honest independence. But, supposing some cannot do for themselves—what becomes the duty of that institution? Why, to make the best of him as a journeyman-if he cannot go on as an employer of men, he must start as a journeyman-but that brings us to the necessity of the times, which is, that manufactories for the employment of the blind be established in all parts of the country where baskets and other goods in large quantities of uniform size are in demand. There, facilities should be given a man to earn the best wages possible. Well, now, if the blind have left the institution and started on their own account, suppose that a man. through sickness and for want of experience at his trade, is unable to go on for want of some efficient help, that help should be given judiciously. In supporting the theory laid down in this Report, I say that there are plenty of men who are failures to-day for want of such help and proper training, and a helping hand just at the start of life, which, if they had it, would have floated them as business men, and made them honest and independent, and to-day they would have been respectable men of business. The failures are not so much the matter in the blind men, but want of proper training in an institution, and want of supervision afterwards. This case in point becomes very important, because I am very anxious, indeed, that there should be an immediate good to the blind as the outcome of this Conference. I have thirteen blind basket makers in the district whom I supply with material, each carrying on a small business of his own; all hard working men. There has been a debt accumulating for several years to me, in all f103. Now, I want to go back to these thirteen men, and as the outcome of this Conference, to take

them something straight, for their good, and I propose this—that if I can get that sum raised by one or more gentlemen to clear that debt off, and give them a clean sheet to start again, I will provide those men with materials to the value of fifty guineas, to prove that I am in earnest. I will give them another start in life, in the shape of material, as stated. Now, that would send me back to Birmingham full of pleasure. It would be a golden ray of hope in the desert of darkness ever before the eyes of the blind, and would give them a new start in life, and help them to a brighter and happier future. I have much pleasure in seconding the Resolution.

The Chairman stated that the adoption of the Report had been moved and seconded, and that as several cards had already been sent up to him from Members anxious to speak on the subject, he hoped that they would distinguish themselves by the brevity of their remarks, and keep as close as possible to the question at issue.

It was proposed by Dr. Campbell and carried, that each speaker be limited to five minutes.

MR. MARTIN: I am afraid that if you adhere rigidly to this matter, I have no right to appear on this platform. I have no hesitation in saying, however, Mr. Chairman, that we undoubtedly have something to learn in Scotland, as you have in England, as to the care of the blind after leaving the institutions. This I believe has been already done to some extent. In 1853 Miss Gilbert began employing workmen at their own The institution with which she was connected I believe still continues to give work to blind workmen at their own homes. In Scotland we have not discouraged blind men going out into the world and working for themselves. On several occasions we have given material and funds to workmen who have gone out. As a general rule these men have returned in the end to the institution. We have never lost sight of them, and we have always given them to know that they have a right to fall back on us, and they look to us if they fail. Our piano tuners and musicians have not certainly come back to us; many of them are making their way very nicely indeed in the world. I am not sure, Mr. Mundella, if you have ever visited the workshops for the blind in Edinburgh. I may say, sir, that our directors and myself were exceedingly sorry that the Royal Commission had not sufficient time at their disposal when in Edinburgh. I should be sorry, Mr. Chairman, if this report were adopted in such fashion as to prevent the establishment of large workshops for the blind in England, very sorry indeed. I am perfectly certain that many of those who in England have gravitated to the streets have done so simply because they have not found opportunities for following the

profession to which they have been trained in your schools. and were unable to establish for themselves businesses at their homes. They may have wanted that supervision after they left school undoubtedly, and that figures as a blot upon England. On one occasion I was addressing a large meeting in London, and I said to the Chairman that I could give him permission to write "rascal" on the back of each blind man he found begging in the streets of the city of Edinburgh. I am not aware that in this city there is one single man begging for his bread who has not had an opportunity of earning his livelihood. I am certain that they are simply mendicants who, because of the superabundant sympathy of the public, prefer to get in the streets what they can, without working for it. I would certainly go this far, and say that you ought to establish the Saxony system in England as largely as possible. but you should not allow the system to prevent the establishment of workshops...

MR. BUCKLE: I think I may very fairly be said to have had my say in the report; but yet there is one little point I should like to direct your attention to. Your very interesting address I listened to with great pleasure and delight. You have not had the pleasure however which I have had in visiting another little kingdom in Europe—I mean Denmark. If you had I think you would not have said that the blind in Saxony were the best cared for in Europe. I believe that my dear friend, Mr. Moldenhawer, will be able to shew us that as much has been done for the blind of Denmark as of Saxony. I wish to point out to this Conference that this question, of what I may call the Saxony system, as opposed to the institution system, is really a very important social question. I do not think it is altogether desirable that we should gather the blind together too much to work at workshops in institutions. I think it very desirable that they should be spread abroad, as far as possible, amongst their seeing brothers and sisters. Ever since I have known anything about Saxony system, I have been an advocate for it. It was with great pleasure that I learnt when I went to York that in the Yorkshire school for the blind, we had a small nest-egg for the purpose of doing exactly the same as what is done in Saxony. I remember making the remark at the York Conference with regard to the large workshops, that I consider it is not fair upon the ratepayers in the neighbourhood to bring more blind together into a town than is really necessary. At the same time there are a certain number of blind workmen who for want of energy or some other such cause must have work provided for them in institutions, and in that respect I think England, or I should say perhaps, the United Kingdom stands the first in the world. We are then on the right track. Let us lay a little more stress upon

the recommendations of this report, and if any good comes out of this Conference, I sincerely hope that this system will be impressed upon the Managers of Blind Institutions. The great difficulty, not merely with the blind, is to help people without pauperising them, to prevent if possible any feeling of dependence, to help them so as to stimulate their efforts in the right direction.

Mr. Hall: I have listened with great pleasure to the Report brought up by the Sub-Committee; it is to my mind most important, and one which the institutions would do well to take up. Now, I suppose at this Conference, that there are not more than a third of the institutions in the United Kingdom represented; therefore, unless a copy of the Report of this Conference is sent to those not represented, they will not know what has been done. I would suggest that Dr. Armitage should kindly undertake to communicate with every institution in the United Kingdom, and bring this matter before them; if he will undertake this work something really practical will be done towards carrying out the recommendations of the Committee as to the visitation and supervision of the blind after leaving the institutions. In our Institution at Swansea, the blind come to us from various counties in Wales, and when they have been instructed, a good many of them wish, naturally, to go back to their own homes. Sometimes they come from villages, and it is a very difficult matter to provide sufficient employment for them in such small places, and if they stay there, they find it difficult to earn their living. Therefore, they should be encouraged to go to a central workshop, where they may obtain constant employment. Recently a man left the institution and went to a small place in Pembrokeshire, and after working for some time as a basket maker, he managed to earn seven or eight shillings per week, but about six months ago he became totally deaf, and came to the Swansea Hospital to see if anything could be done to cure his deafness. Nothing could be done, and he has gone back to the same place, and the difficulty to find him employment is increased, in consequence of his deafness.

THE CHAIRMAN said, that it was difficult to bring home to an institution the importance of this question, but that he intended to move when the Bill is before the House of Commons, that one of the conditions of a Government grant should be the care of its former pupils by each institution.

MR. W. HARRIS: Up to this point we have heard much about the occupations of the blind, and of their competing with those who can see. We have now arrived at another phase of the subject, one upon which all seem to agree, viz., that the blind need, and will always continue to need, the help of those who can see. It is quite true. I regret that I cannot approve

of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on this subject, or the means which they propose for carrying it out. In the first place, let me remind you with regard to the Saxony system, that the circumstances and social habits of Saxony and England are very different. In Saxony there are about 2,000 blind, in Great Britain there about 32,000. Let us see what we are asked to recommend. I read from the description given by Mr. Buttner, of the Dresden Institution for the Blind—"Every blind child in Saxony is received, since education there is compulsory, for the blind, as well as the seeing. Very few are being trained as piano-tuners, as there is not much demand, and it is feared that this will oblige the blind tuner to seek custom from house to house, which might lead to his degradation. Rope-making has been taught for fifty-one years. As there is much exposure to weather, the rope-maker must possess a sound constitution. All the produce of the workshop is sent to the central depôt in Dresden to be disposed of. This also takes and disposes of any work by the old pupils, male or female, for which they find it absolutely impossible to find a market. Another source of income is an annual subscription from the parishes from which the blind pupils have been sent. When a pupil is ready to leave the institution, the Director first goes to the future residence of the pupil, and looks out for some gentleman of position, respectability, and good common-sense, to watch over the interests of the blind person. The clergyman, mayor, or some manufacturer is generally chosen for this purpose, and this duty has never been declined by anyone. Very often the parents' home is not convenient for carrying on the trade selected, and the first thing to do is to find more commodious lodgings; and, if necessary, the Director guarantees the punctual payment of the rent for some time. A basket maker will require some place for soaking his willows, and a rope-maker will need a rope walk near his dwelling. When a pupil leaves, his or her outfit consists of a bedstead and all necessary bedding, clothes, materials to start with, tools, and in the case of a rope-maker, his wheel. The outfit of a rope-maker comes to £18 5s. and that of a basket maker f 7 5s. The parish lays out the rope walk, and gives the land. It generally pays to the fund from f 1 10s. to f 2 for each pupil. The outfit of female pupils costs about £7. The materials required for his (the pupil's) work are sent from the institution, at wholesale prices, whenever the blind workman wishes for them. A few years ago, some of the smaller states adjoining Saxony, made arrangements for their blind to be educated in the Dresden Institution. These children were in all respects educated as the Saxon children. They returned to their home after completing their education, but unfortunately, there was no system of supervision after leaving the school, and the result was that they almost all failed; whilst their Saxon

companions, living under the same circumstances, almost invariably succeeded. This difference could only result from the want of supervision and timely help, and advice in the case of the children belonging to the small States; these have, however, now undertaken the supervision, and the result is as satisfactory as it is in Saxony." It comes to this, that in Saxony the blind are not independent, and they need much help and much money. Will Government or our County Council help? will it buy a rope-walk, &c., &c. Let us see what we have got in England of which the blind may avail themselves, if they desire to do so. We have schools and workshops, home-teaching societies, pension charity. Some blind are helped to work at their homes where they can do so with advantage. The blind are cared for and visited by the clergy and ministers of the different denominations, also by district visitors, Scripture-readers, and Bible-women. There are benefit clubs, savings banks, &c. Why then do we want registration of the blind, and an inspector? and who is to pay him? also the cost of his railway journeys, &c.? When our blind want help they can ask for it, and if possible it is given.

Mr. Keir: As I have already occupied a good deal of your time I do not propose to do so to-day, but having some small experience in this matter I feel it to be a duty to all that I should give it. In Aberdeen the workshop system is carried on as in Edinburgh. When I was about eighteen years of age the superintendent at the institution where I was employed found it necessary, owing to dulness of trade, to reduce the staff. I went to the superintendent and said there were others who might work for eight shillings per week, but I could not do so myself and live. I, therefore, arranged with him to go home until trade improved, and there pursue my calling, which was basket-making. In carrying on my work I experienced great difficulty. To begin with, I had received a most imperfect industrial training. I had, as a matter of fact, to teach myself. I was three years out of the institution, and during that time I almost learnt more in the art of basketmaking than in the institution; for during my time there I was learning almost nothing apart from what I got from my fellowworkmen. Another difficulty was my remoteness from any industrial centre, where my goods were most required, and the materials which I required had to be brought a great distance, increasing its cost considerably. The greater part of my materials, I may add, was purchased from the Blind Asylum in Aberdeen at the market price. After an absence of three years I returned to the institution, trade having improved. I should like to say, in connection with this, that the superintendent of our institution, in giving evidence before the Royal Commission, thought the circumstances which I have just related sufficient to justify him in saying that he knew a man who had left the institution and was obliged to go back again, and could not earn five shillings per week when absent. Where that gentleman got that information I do not know, he had no possible means of knowing the truth. As a matter of fact, I kept no account of my transactions during the three years, so could not have given an accurate statement myself. Sometimes statements are made by managers which cannot be relied upon. I am sorry this gentleman is not here; I regret that he is not here to hear the statement, as I make it in all frankness. Anyhow, I have to say that my non-success, if it may be so called, was due more to insufficient training, inexperience (I being only eighteen years of age), and remoteness of situation, than to any other cause, and did not justify the statement made by the party already referred to. In reference to Mr Martin's statement, I have to say that I have known blind men coming from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, and we have given them financial aid. I know in Aberdeen there are many blind men who cannot find work in the institution at anything like a wage that would support them, and I have no doubt but the same thing prevails in Edinburgh, which is certainly to be deplored. There is one place in Scotland where they train pupils on the English system—I mean Inverness. They train them there and send them out. I had a conversation with a pupil who had been there for three years, that being the allotted time for training. This pupil complained of the shortness of the time, which did not permit him to receive a proper industrial training. This accounts for the fact that there are so many blind persons unable to earn a decent living. Now there is another portion I should comment on, it is the women who are afflicted. I have often felt for them, owing to the kind of work they have to do in the institution. How few of these can earn a living for themselves? I really think something could be done for them, to make their lot more tolerable. For instance, in our institution they are chiefly employed in weaving sheep-nets, which is very hard work. I understand that in kindred institutions in Scotland women are employed in sewing mattress-covers, which is lighter work. For some reason or other, this kind of work is not done by the blind girls in Aberdeen, our people preferring sighted girls to do it, which I think is not right.

Mr. Martin: The Conference ought distinctly to understand that after a lad has had his education carried up to sixteen in the Edinburgh Institution, he is usually sent back to the community which is responsible for his employment.

Mr. Moldenhawer: It is not usual for me to speak English, so I must use as few words as possible. We in our little country of Denmark have tried to assist the blind after leaving the institution, by making them as independent as possible. When the new department was about to be estab-

lished, I went to see what was done elsewhere. I visited England and other countries; but it was in Saxony that I learned how they can make the pupils work at their own homes, and the first thing is to try to make the blind work for themselves without being put together in a workshop. So when I went home I took care that the first pupils who left our institution should belong to an association which should take care of the blind and which should have a fund to assist them in future years. We helped the blind by granting them materials to enable them to work in their profession, and when sickness occurred, by giving them assistance. I believe it to be a good thing to have a workshop. I learnt from England and Scotland that we could have workshops for the blind where they can go and work when they want. The system of assisting men to work at their own homes was first started in Saxony, and thus it bears the name "Saxony System." We have funds to assist blind people to become independent, whether educated or not in an institution. If a man loses his sight late in life we take as much care of him as one educated in an institution. We have no establishment for adults, but we take care that they learn something.

Mr. Shadwell: I have only one fault to find with the previous speaker, not a serious one, and that is that he was too short. I have heard about the Saxony system, but I do not know how it is worked. I should like to know very much. I say from my own experience that some assistance is required for enabling the blind to get employment when they are qualified for the work. It is difficult to learn to do a thing, and also difficult to convince people that you can do it. When I have taken up things myself, I have found no difficulty whatever in mastering the subject, but when I wish to persuade people that I could measure or do things of that kind, then I found the difficulty began. It is not enough for a man to say he can do all this. He must give some proof. The Universities give a certificate of a certain kind and degree, and what is wanted for the blind above all other things is some organisation of that kind which can certify that a man can teach music or make baskets or whatever it may be. We are not entirely behind Saxony in this respect, as some speakers may have led the meeting to believe. The British and Foreign Blind Association, of which I have been a member on the Council from the first. has devoted itself not only to education, but to the amelioration of the condition of the blind, and although we do not put that forward so prominently in our title, we have done something in the way for the last twenty years. If you could reckon up the number of blind people who have found employment through Dr. Armitage, of that Society, they would amount to several

hundreds. From my own experience I know of so many people whom he has helped in one way or another, that I am sure if they were all reckoned up they would form a very large number indeed. There is, however, a special danger in the case of blind people, which makes supervision absolutely necessary. I believe that pupils from this college at Norwood are written to and looked after from time to time.

DR. CAMPBELL: The subject of supervision is very necessary, not only for the special effect upon the blind themselves, but also from the very powerful effect on the management of the institutions. When the committee and principal of any institution realize that they must help to find employment for their pupils, they certainly will not fail to see that their pupils are thoroughly qualified for the work they have in hand. I began working upon this system in America in 1862, and we have always carried it out in Norwood.

Mr. W. Mead: In the year 1860 I was passing through the streets of Pimlico possessed of sight and I saw six blind men in a crowd singing in the streets, and I was painfully struck with what I saw and heard. The following year I became blind myself, and shortly after this event happened, I was appointed to take charge of the north side of the river in connection with the Home Teaching Society. I soon discovered the homes of the six blind men; they were living in wretched places in Westminster, and I ascertained that all these men had been in one or another of the institutions of London or of the provinces. Passing from the homes of the people I visited the workhouses and found in almost every one of them some blind persons who had been in one or other of our schools for six or seven years, and this experience applies to the whole of the thirty years of my life and work among the blind. After six years connection with the Home Teaching Society I went into the East-end of London in connection with the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, and we had a class for the blind in Whitechapel. We soon multiplied the number, and had small centres in various parts. As I am anxious not to take up too much time, I will say briefly that there are now 167 blind persons attending the classes held at St. Philip's Institute, behind the London Hospital; of this number seventy-five are males, and in going through the list of men attending the Mission I found that fourteen had been in some institution. Of these fourteen men three are doing something, that is to say, are following the trade which they learnt in an institution, but only one of the three is making a living, and the others are only getting a partial living by their work. There are ninety-two females attending the Mission, and of these twenty-one have passed through institutions, and I am sorry to say that not one of the twenty-one is able to make a living by what they were taught in the school. You may ask

"What are they doing, then?" Well, they are being partially supported by work privately given by Mrs. Armitage, who spends about £200 a year in getting them knitting and crochet work to do, which is afterwards given to other institutions. But for this work given by Mrs. Armitage, many of them would be in a very sorry plight, as it is a hard struggle with many of them. In Poplar workhouse there is a young woman of nineteen who spent eight years in a professional blind school. Towards the latter end of her time in the school she was taught chair-caning. After being there eight years, she had to leave that institution to enter the walls of the Poplar workhouse, where she is to-day, with no better prospect. I quite agree with those recommendations of the Report, commencing with No. 8, and I think we are much in want of supervision and assistance from the societies and institutions where the blind have spent a portion of their time. It is not only that a man needs money or material, but also institutions to look after his interest; but a man wants also a superintendent to work with, and if he knows that on leaving the institution he will be thought of and have sympathy, and have help as far as it can be given, this will be sufficient to inspire that man with an energy and courage which will make him exert himself a great deal more than if left to his own resources.

Mr. James Ewing, of Glasgow: In connection with work and supervision I should just like to say one or two words regarding the subject before the Conference. I entirely concur with what you call the Saxony idea in so far as it is practicable; there is no other idea which is equal to that of having the blind working independently in their own homes. I think that in some places the proportion may be small of those who succeed in this way, but self-reliance acts as a stimulus, and a few of us are in a position to-day which we could never have attained had we been confined to institutions or workshops. At the same time I certainly think that workshops are perfectly necessary for certain of the class, who apart from institutions could not do for themselves at all. I think we are safest in attempting both these systems. I think the greatest advantages might accrue to the class if work could be received by institutions and workshops throughout the country in places where the blind are located in districts where they have not an outlet for their work, especially if the managers would say to them "Well we will as far as possible relieve you of your work, and find work for you;" or, in other words, "when you cannot find work for yourself we will give you work to do." There are a certain number of disadvantages connected with this, but if an institution of some years standing which has considerable influence over a great part of the country could bring that influence to bear upon the community, there would be a much greater market obtained for articles of commerce than a private individual

could command in an out of the way district. I might also suggest that in cases where the blind are located, where there is not an outlet for their work, the best thing is to find the district where their ability can be brought into proper play and they can have fair remuneration. I am pleased to hear this subject discussed, and certainly hope that the outcome may be to the advantage of the class for whom it is intended.

Dr. Armitage: This subject of looking after the pupils. starting them in business after leaving the institution, and assisting them from time to time, when needed, is, in my opinion, the most important of any connected with the blind, on which there is still much difference of opinion. We have heard during this Conference of the miserable failure of a large number of the pupils, who leave many of our institutions, and, however unpleasant this fact may be, it cannot be too generally known. No adequate remedy will ever be applied until the disease is fully appreciated. When the Royal Commission visited the institutions, we always asked the question—"Do you keep up communication with your old pupils, and to what extent are they supporting themselves by the trades they learnt when in the institution?" We invariably found that no communication, or only one of the most imperfect kind, is kept up. The Committees told us that they had good reason to be satisfied with the after success of their old pupils, but this happy state of mind appeared to result from their manager informing them of the successes, while they did not hear of the frequent failures. In fact, neither the Manager, nor the Committee, can know the real state of things. unless a careful and complete register is kept, which is not done. There is a great misapprehension on this subject of looking after the old pupils, which is often called the Saxon system. essential feature of this plan is, that the school authorities should know exactly what their former pupils are doing, that they should start them in business, and give them wise, moral, and material support, as long as they deserve it. This may be done by employing them in workshops, or assisting them to start at home on their own account. Mr. Martin and Mr. Harris have referred to Miss Gilbert as having started this Saxon system in England. She did nothing of the kind, but she had the great honour of starting the first workshop for the out-door blind, which was quite independent of any school or institution, and, therefore, had nothing to do with the systematic care of the old pupils, recommended in the Report just read. Mr. Keir, of Aberdeen, from whom we have had so much useful and practical information. is here as a blind working basket maker, and as representative of his blind fellow workmen in Aberdeen—not the representative of any institution. I am very glad that we have him, as a fellowhelper, among us; as it always happens, that when we get to the

men who are doing the work we obtain valuable information. Mr. Keir has told us that he left the institution to work at home: but having been very imperfectly taught, he could not, at first, execute many of his orders. Now, this is just a case in point; if the institution had been in communication with him, the manager would have learnt in what respects the teaching was defective, and might have improved it accordingly. It cannot be too often repeated that the system recommended in the Report of the Sub-Committee, is not working at home as against workshops. On either plan the old pupils can be assisted. It is probably easier to establish and conduct a workshop, than to look after the interests of a number of blind people working at home; but if a blind man has energy, he may rise from a simple journeyman to a manufacturer, with men working under him. Take the case of a basket maker, who leaves the institution to work in a village or small town. The Director, or whoever may have the charge of looking after the old pupils, observes that he is steady and industrious. When he has had sufficient experience, it may be greatly to his advantage to start a small shop. If circumstances are favourable this would be done for him. I have visited a good many basket makers in Saxony who have been helped in this way, and who are living far more comfortably than if they were mere journeymen. The less energetic or clever workmen must continue to work as journeymen in workshops, but an opportunity should be given to rise to those who are capable of it, Mr. Hall has suggested that I should communicate with the managers of all institutions on this subject; but I must observe that, for the past five or six years, I have been constantly writing and speaking on this subject. I hope that if the Conference adopts our Report, this may help on the much needed reform. I may, however, remark, that no one is likely to take this work up enthusiastically without seeing it in actual operation. I, myself, heard of the Saxon Fürsorge about twenty-five years ago, from a Saxon gentleman I met at the Director's of the Paris Institution, and I have heard much of it in Germany, from time to time, since; but, although believing, to a certain extent, these reports, I never really realised the importance of the subject until actually visiting the former pupils in their own homes. Mr. Büttner, the Director of the Dresden Institution, has kindly offered to show the working of the system to the Director or Members of Committee of any of our Institutions. It will, however, be necessary to have some acquaintance with German; then, I cannot conceive a pleasanter way of passing a week or ten days than in visiting, as I have twice done, in company with the Director, the Blind at their own homes in the beautiful valleys of Saxony, and I am sure that conviction will be the result of such a visit.

DR. CAMPBELL: The practice of the Royal Normal College is to send a circular letter in December to all the old pupils, asking them to give their experiences during the year. This keeps us in touch with our old pupils, and also gives us many valuable suggestions in regard to the employment of others.

MR. BUCKLE: Mr Harris, of Leicester, has passed a notice to me just now to the effect that if any member would wish for a copy of the Report of the Conference at York in 1883, of which there are copies down stairs, he will be very glad to pay for them. On page 237 of that Report you will find an account of how former pupils are dealt with in the Düren Institution for the Blind.

Mr. Townson: I feel greatly obliged to the Chairman, Dr. Armitage, and others for their able remarks, and I think we ought to express these obligations. There is one thing I think we ought to do, so as to render assistance to old pupils: can we have more communication with other workers amongst the blind? Any blind persons coming into our district I should be very glad to do every thing I could to help. I should like to say that the British and Foreign Blind Association have given immense help to the blind associations in the country, and deserve our hearty thanks. The work amongst the blind requires to be kept public, and we may obtain publicity by local articles. If we wrote an article on any special subject, the Press would insert it, and it would be an advantage to know in what paper the questions affecting the blind would appear. There are two or three for the blind, but it seems desirable to know which paper could be recognized amongst those working amongst the blind as the special means of communication to each other.

Mr. Willis: For the last three days of this Conference we have had the pleasure of listening to the Managing Directors of many Institutions, and we are thankful to know that there are so many interested in our welfare. While thanking them, however, we ask them to do a little more, and help the pupils after leaving school by finding them employment. There is one question always asked of every blind person when brought in contact with a sighted person; that question is, "Were you ever in an institution, or in a school?" I have been asked that question thousands of times. I am sure the mistaken idea that we blind people can do little else than turn a mangle or a barrel organ arises from the fact that a helping hand is wanting after many leave their schools. You may often see a lady or a gentleman speaking to a blind man. and the lady or gentleman asking him if he has been in a blind school? the answer will probably be, yes; but it will not occur to that lady or gentleman that there was any fault to be found with the institution; this will not occur to their minds. They just bid the man good-bye with the exclamation "I hope you will do well," or something to this effect, and do not give the subject

any further consideration. I once came across a blind boy full of energy, and, seeing that he was the right sort, I wrote to Dr. Armitage as to his case, and he obtained fro for him. With this he executed large orders, and he now has a place fairly stocked, and is supporting himself and doing well. I may say positively (and this is also the experience of others), that there are numbers of the blind in the streets to-day, begging for a living, who are there only because they did not have a helping hand in the time of need.

Mr. Colin Macdonald, of Dundee: I quite agree with the previous speakers, in thinking that the blind who leave our institutions should be cared for by the parent-institution, and every assistance given them when necessary; but I rather fear that the tendency of most of the speeches will be to encourage many blind, who are at present working contentedly in our workshops and earning fair wages, to start business on their own account. As a general rule I would strongly dissuade them from such a course. Our experience in Scotland in this connection has been most unsatisfactory. I could mention several cases of blind men, who were in receipt of good wages, leaving the institution and starting an independent trade for themselves, who after a few years' experience had failed, and were glad to return to the workshops. Nowadays, it takes a clever man with all his faculties to run a successful business, and the blind man who enters the field, must have exceptional capabilities if he is to succeed. When we find men in our workshops with the business tact and go of Mr. Plater, and our friend from Aberdeen, we would not hesitate to encourage them to start business; but I think I speak the mind of the majority of the blind in Scotland, when I say that they would prefer to remain in institutions, where constant employment is provided, and big wages may be earned, rather than run the risks and endure the worries which the management of a business of their own would be sure to entail.

Mr. W. H. Rook referred to the fact, that he was working on his own occount; that had it not been for a recent serious loss, he would be able to show a good profit to-day. He also referred to the assistance he had received from Gardner's Trust for the Blind towards starting in his trade on his own account, and expressed deep regret at the manner in which many pupils after leaving school, drifted into the streets to seek a living in consequence of their not being looked after by the authorities of the school, where they were instructed.

The Resolution moved by Mr. Rawson Carter, of Sheffield, and seconded by Mr. Plater, of Birmingham, that—"The Report be adopted, and that the best thanks of the Conference be given

to the Sub-Committee for preparing the same," was put from the chair, and carried unanimously.

On the motion of Dr. Campbell, a vote of thanks to the Chairman was put to the meeting and carried.

MADAME VERD: The French people who have assisted at the Conference, and who have been able to visit this beautiful establishment, will not let this last séance be finished without expressing to the Directors of the Royal Normal College, and to the Committee who have taken the initiative of this meeting the expression of their real gratitude for the hearty welcome given to them, and the important lessons they have learnt. They thank Dr. Armitage, promoter of this Conference, who is always ready to occupy himself in all that concerns the blind, and Dr. Campbell, the eminent Director of the Royal Normal College, to accept, as a very modest memorial of the Conference of 1890, a silver medal, with an impression in relief of Valentine Haüy, who was the founder of the first school for the blind, that is to say, the first and the greatest benefactor of the blind. They beg of them, also, to accept for the Royal Normal College, the things that the National Institution has sent to the Exhibition, including the bust of Valentine Haüy.

The CHAIRMAN having referred to the number of excellent speeches that he had listened to, explained that the meeting should remember that the system which had been discussed does not come in contact either with institutions or with workshops. or with any other agency or organization for helping the blind. but it supplements them all, and that although some speakers thought that the workshop was the great desideratum, that was no reason why the blind outside of these establishments should not be cared for. He further added that he had come to the conclusion that the best thing that can be done for blind persons is to restore them to society, and allow them to live in the bosom of their families, or with friends, so as to share with their fellows all the pleasures, pains, and anxieties of life. He recommended the Saxony system, as described by Dr. Armitage, and stated that what was wanted was to fit people for the work of every-day life, and to put the blind, as far as possible, in the position of the seeing, and that when they settle down in certain localities persons should be found who would interest themselves in these blind cases, and give assistance, and make it known that they require employment. Having referred to the necessity of making the net of organization as complete and fine as possible so that none can escape, he added that we ought not, through love of our institutions, to blind ourselves to the fact that some of our young men go straight on the streets after leaving school. In conclusion, the Chairman moved that a hearty vote of thanks be given to the friends from

various countries, who had contributed so largely to the success of the Conference.

DR. ARMITAGE, who addressed the meeting in French, said: Ladies and Gentlemen, we thank you with all our hearts for the aid you have given us at this Conference; your presence has assisted us much, and we thank you, and especially M. de la Sizeranne for the excellent paper he has given us on the "Société de Placement et de Secours." I beg most cordially to thank M. Martin not only in my public, but also in my private capacity, for the great honour he has conferred upon Dr. Campbell and myself in presenting us with silver medals, bearing on them the likeness of Valentin Haüy, and I can assure M. Martin that the father of blind education is as much reverenced in England as in France. We owe much to France, and I trust that our French friends will have seen something and heard something during the present Conference which may be useful to the blind in their country.

MADAME VERD and Mr. MOLDENHAWER briefly returned thanks for the kind way in which they and the other representatives from Institutions on the Continent had been received at the Conference.

Mr. Martin announced that the Sub-Committee, appointed for making arrangements for the next Conference, had agreed unanimously that it should be held at Edinburgh in July, 1893.

The following were elected as a Committee of Organization of the said Conference: Messrs. Martin and Illingworth (joint secretaries), Dr. Armitage, Messrs. Buckle, Ewing, Pine, Plater, and Stoddart.

After the usual vote of thanks to the authorities at Norwood College, and to the Committee of Organization, the Conference terminated.

PRIZE FESTIVAL OF THE ROYAL NORMAL COLLEGE.

On the afternoon of July 25th, the Members of the Conference met at the Crystal Palace to attend the Prize Festival of the Royal Normal College.

PROGRAMME.

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Quarter to Three, in Concert Room,

CONCERT

BY THE PUPILS OF

THE ROYAL NORMAL COLLEGE

AND

Academy of Music for the Blind,

AND

THE CRYSTAL PALACE ORCHESTRAL BAND.

Conductor:

Mr. August Manns.

From 2 o'clock to 2.45 there were Classes in Kindergarten Work and Modelling, also Practical Illustrations of the Work of the Pianoforte Tuning Department, opposite the Handel Orchestra.

5.30 p.m., Organ Recital—Mr. Alfred Hollins.

6 p.m., Gymnastic Display. Music by the Crystal Palace Military Band; Bandmaster, Mr. Charles Godfrey, jun.

I. CONCERTO IN E MINOR FOR ORGAN AND ORCHESTRA On the present occasion each movement is taken by a different player, so as to bring forward as many performers as possible. ORGAN, 1st Movement, Mr. Alexander Matheson. and Movement, MISS MABEL DAVIS. 3rd Movement, MISS EMILY LUCAS. 2. Allegretto Scherzando ... Harry Turner (A Pupil of the College). 3. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra No. 1, IN G. MINOR Mendelssohn. . . Pianoforte-Miss Constance Davis. Molto Allegro con fuoco (G minor). Andante (E major). Presto (E minor). Molto Allegro e Vivace (G major). 4. Part-Song, "Break, break, break" G. A. Macfarren. 5. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra NO I IN E FLAT Liszt. Pianoforte-Mr. Alfred Hollins. Allegro maestoso. Allegretto vivace. Quasi adagio. Allegro marziale animato. 6. HYMN OF PRAISE (Lobgesang), Op. 52 Mendelssohn. Solos BY MISS MABEL DAVIS, MISS MARION HYDE, MISS ADA SMITH, MISS AMELIA CAMPBELL, AND MR. THOMAS WHITE. Organ-Mr Alfred Hollins. Symphony. Maestoso con moto: Allegro-B flat. Allegretto un poco agitato-G minor and major. Adagio religioso-D Major. CHORUS. ii. Solo (Soprano) and Semi-Chorus. iii. RECITATIVE—(Tenor). AIR. CHORUS. DUET (Sopranos) and CHORUS.

vi. Scena—(Tenor). Solo (Soprano). vii. Chorus. viii. CHORAL (nun danket alle Gott). ix. DUET—(Soprano and Tenor). x. Chorus.

The following brief criticism from the *Norwood Review* will suffice to show the character of the performance:—

"The concert was certainly remarkable, considered from every aspect. In the first place the programme selected for performance was in itself a daring assertion of confidence in the powers and abilities of the pupils. None but musicians of superexcellence, both as to natural ability and artistic training, could reasonably be expected successfully to cope with the enormous technical difficulties presented in the pieces, instrumental and vocal. Prout's concerto in E minor, for organ and orchestra, was to have been played by Mr. A. Matheson, Miss Mabel Davis, and Miss E. Lucas. Each Soloist would have played one of the three movements which made up the concerto, but in consequence of a request from numerous foreign visitors, who desired to hear Mr. Hollins perform Liszt's piano concerto in E flat (a request made only a few hours before the concert) it was found necessary to omit two, so that the audience had to content themselves with one movement only, but the excellence of the performance gave reason for general regret that the other soloists had not an opportunity of displaying their skill. Miss Constance Davis was to have played the whole of Mendelssohn's concerto in G minor, but for the reason above stated she was only permitted to perform the Presto and the Molto Allegro. Notwithstanding the nervousness naturally expected from a really artistic temperament she acquitted herself with great distinction.

"The Crystal Palace orchestra played an allegretto scherzando composed by H. Turner, late a student of the College, which gave evidence of much talent and promise. Of Mr. Hollins's performance it is almost unnecessary to say that it was a remarkable exhibition of memory, technique, and musicianly power rarely found in combination.

"The vocal music included an exquisite part-song, 'Break, break,' exquisitely sung, and a most magnificent rendering of Mendelssohn's Lobgesang, 'The Hymn of Praise.' soloists in this work, special mention should be made of Mr. T. White, who sang the tenor part as well as it could be sung; the reading and the vocalism were well-nigh perfect. duet, 'I waited for the Lord,' was most admirably rendered by Miss Hyde and Miss Smith, and Miss Campbell joined Mr. White in the duet, 'My song shall be.' The solo, 'Praise thou,' was sung by Miss M. Davis. Of all these, nothing but praise can be recorded. It remains to speak of the perfection attained by the chorus, all pupils of the Normal College. Not only were they note-perfect, but they sang with an intelligence and attention to the novances indicated by the composer in a manner which elicited the warmest approval. A distinguished professor from Paris audibly expressed his astonishment at the

distinct enunciation of the words, the firmness of attack, purity of tone, and accurate intonation. We, in common with all who heard it, hope the college authorities will give us many opportunities of hearing Mendelssohn's great work, given as they only can.

"At the conclusion of the concert the Duchess of Westminster presented the prizes, addressing a few words to some of the recipients which were generally acknowledged. About 80 young people were mentioned on the prize-list.

"After handing the awards to the successful pupils, the Duchess of Westminster, in reply to a resolution of thanks, said she was greatly obliged for the kind way in which the motion had been received. She was very sorry that the Duke was unable to be present that afternoon, for he, too, took the greatest interest in the college, and wished it every success.

"A gymnastic display, to the accompaniment of the Crystal Palace Military Band, was afterwards given in the centre transept of the building. This was a remarkable revelation to those who were not previously acquainted with the skill the pupils have acquired in athletics, under the able direction of Mr. Guy Campbell. The frequent bursts of applause from the large company assembled gave evidence of the interest and appreciation of the public in this part of the programme."

EXHIBITION.

During the Conference an Exhibition was held at St. Andrew's Hall, immediately opposite the College gates. The Societies which took part in this Exhibition were—

Belfast Workshops for the Blind: Bradford Institution for the Blind: BRISTOL HOME TEACHING SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND; BRITISH AND FOREIGN BLIND ASSOCIATION: CARDIFF WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND: COPENHAGEN ROYAL BLIND ASYLUM: GREENWICH WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND; ILLZACH INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND: KENSINGTON INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND: LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC BLIND ASYLUM; NOTTINGHAM INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND: PARIS NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND; SHEFFIELD INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND: Surrey Association for the Blind: WEST CRAIGMILLAR (EDINBURGH ROYAL BLIND ASYLUM); YORK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

The exhibits were in every case good, and in many excellent, but it will be unnecessary to do more than notice exhibits which were either new or illustrate some point which is not generally known.

THE BELFAST display of baskets and basket chairs was most satisfactory; special interest is attached to this Exhibition, as forms are generally used at these workshops, which may account for the great accuracy of shape of their chairs, &c., and the low price of their small baskets.

BRADFORD showed a magnificent assortment of brushes, &c.

The British and Foreign Blind Association exhibited maps which are well known, and M. Mascaro's modification of the Braille system of writing sent from Lisbon by the "inventor," for exhibition. M. Mascaro, while retaining the Braille character, alters the meaning of almost all the signs. No explanation of his reasons for this course accompanied the specimens, and it is difficult to conceive any adequate reason. Those who examined the papers considered that M. Mascaro's changes are not only most objectionable as changes in an established system, but that if his modification and the original Braille were submitted for the first time to them, the original Braille is far the most simple and best adapted to the wants of the Blind.

COPENHAGEN exhibited a number of ingenious tools to assist the blind in cutting out and sewing boots; also some well-made boots and shoes. It has been found by long experience at this school that bootmaking is a trade at which the blind can earn good wages, and which, as it can be carried on at home and in the country, as well as in the towns, is peculiarly well fitted for them.

Greenwich, in addition to the exhibits common to most workshops, sent some well-made ship-fenders, and a life-saving buoy.

ILLZACH, ALSACE LORRAINE, sent an atlas of maps made by the director, M. Kunz. In this atlas are many maps of countries which are not contained in the collection of the British and Foreign Blind Association, such as Spain, Greece, Germany in sections, &c. The rivers are represented by raised lines; the divisions of the countries by dotted lines. They are printed on blank paper, and there is no embossed guide to them, so that self-teaching by means of them is impossible, but they are cheap, and deserve to be much more widely known and used in the institutions of the United Kingdom than they are at present.

PARIS. THE NATIONAL INSTITUTION, sent a series of excellent maps, 25 by 19 inches. The material used is not stated, but they seemed to be made of some fibre, hardened with plaster of Paris. The land is sharply raised above the sea. Rivers are represented by raised lines; division of countries by dotted lines. The price of these maps is not given, but they form a valuable addition to the means of geographical study for the blind. The first of these maps was exhibited at Cologne in 1878. A small globe was also exhibited, about eight inches diameter. It is made of papier-maché, and the continents and islands are made of feltlike material, and stuck on to the globe. This is a return to the old globes used in Paris some twenty years ago, and superseded by similar globes made of white metal. It is very distinct and more

agreeable to the touch than the metal globes, though not nearly so attractive to the eye. The price being low, five shillings, it is quite practicable, during the geographical lessons, to put a globe into each of the pupils' hands, which facilitates class teaching. The new arithmetical apparatus—the Cubarithm—was also shown. This consists of a board with small holes, into which a cube fits, bearing on its sides Braille letters to represent numbers. It does not seem that calculating can be done as rapidly with this apparatus as with the ordinary octagonal slate, but it might be made use of as a Kindergarten game.

M. Ballu exhibited his pocket frame for writing between the points as distinguished from the ordinary interlined writing. This is already pretty well known, is inexpensive, and answers its purpose well. M. Ballu also exhibited a frame for writing Roman letters by means of raised points. This frame is coming into very general use in France and is fast superseding stylography, as the writing, being more mechanical, requires less skill for its execution. It is a pocket frame consisting of a grooved bed and guide which latter contains three rows of ordinary Braille openings, separated from each other horizontally and vertically by equal interspaces. In ordinary writing five grooves vertically are used. A small key is published, giving directions as to the construction of the letters. The writing is clear to the eye, and moderately so to the touch. It has the same advantage as stylography—that the writer can feel his work and avoid mistakes that he discovers.

Sheffield made a great display of brushes, baskets, &c.

THE SURREY ASSOCIATION, in addition to the usual exhibits of baskets, showed carpenters' work—towel rails, housemaids' pails, &c. These are all made by one workman, who is able to earn good wages.

Westcraigmillar, the School of the Royal Blind Asylum, Edinburgh, exhibited some books printed by it in Braille. The impression of these was good.

YORK exhibited a great variety of baskets, which were well made. Forms are much used at this institution for baskets requiring great accuracy of shape.

THE ROYAL NORMAL COLLEGE exhibited the following type writers, which Dr. Campbell has, by a very simple device, enabled the blind to use as rapidly as seeing persons:—

*The "Caligraph."
The "Hall Typewriter."
The "Hammond Typewriter."

The "Remington Typewriter." The "World Typewriter."

Lastly, Messrs. Cockburn, Phillips & Montgomery's "Braille Typewriter."

^{*} The Typewriters are arranged Alphabetically.

Dr. Campbell, who has had much experience with Typewriters, condemns all attempts to use embossed letters in order to indicate the keys of the Typewriters. He, in all cases, prefers raising certain keys above the others, so that the blind operator can write by position and not depend upon feeling for the letters. The enormous rapidity of blind writers who have used this method clearly shows its advantages. Dr. Campbell will have great pleasure in giving information in regard to any of the Typewriters mentioned above.









